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WELCOME

FROM THE EDITOR



N THE WONDERFUL WORLD of photography, special effects is an extremely broad area that can include delicate nature images alongside Hollywood-style visuals! In this issue, we cover a huge variety of styles and techniques, immersing you in a thorough creative grounding that will allow you to explore your own ideas.

Our Photoshop Genius section starts on p69 and in eight great imaging projects, we reveal how you can add a plethora of great-looking effects to your pics. All the techniques involved are tried and tested, and you can see them brought to life by our expert team in the accompanying video lessons on the CD. By following these in your software with the start images provided, you'll develop your editing skills at a cracking pace!

We also have a stack of new features in this packed issue, and they're all designed to enhance your photo knowledge and stretch your creative skills. All told, it makes Digital Photo the most complete photo mag on the market, so dive in, get busy with your camera and software, then send your results to us at dpimages@bauermedia.co.uk

Ion Adams Editor jon.adams@bauermedia.co.uk





On the cover

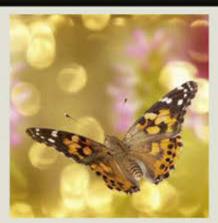
The Lost World was created by Finnish photographer Mikko Lagerstedt. He used his Nikon D800 DSLR with a Samyang 14mm lens, and took a number of different exposures to create the final effect - a technique Mikko employs for many of his pictures. First, he exposed to capture the detail in the boat, then used two additional exposures to capture the foreground and the star-strewn sky. The three shots were seamlessly blended together in Photoshop to produce the final image. To see more of Mikko's exceptional work, visit www.mikkolagerstedt.com

Three ways we'll help you get better pictures this month



Inspirational shooting ideas

If you've ever wanted to get scenes super sharp right the way through, we provide the solution with our definitive guide to focus stacking on p36. It'll change the way you shoot!



Top Photoshop techniques

From delicate, bokeh-rich nature scenes to full-pelt Hollywood visuals, this issue serves up a huge array of brilliant ideas and techniques for special effects. See p69.



The best gear buying advice

Along with reviews of two new CSCs from Canon and Samsung, we test the top smartphones on the market, plus give the lowdown on the latest Lightroom software.

GET A MANFROTTO MONOPOD WORTH £54

PLUS A YEAR'S SUPPLY OF THE UK'S BEST MAGAZINE - SEE P24



IKE US ON FACEBOOK!

www.facebook.com/ digitalphotouk

JULY PHOTO

Inspiration

8 PLANET PHOTO

Get inspired by our all-new gallery of pics from the world's best photographers.

20 IT WORKS FOR ME!

Readers share their pics and stories after being inspired by Digital Photo projects.

60 THE BIG INTERVIEW: **AMOS CHAPPLE**



The photojournalist reveals his approach to shooting the world's most famous landmarks with a remote-piloted camera drone.

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Our resident Photoshop medic balances the light on an indoor still-life scene.

Camera techniques



36 SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND!

Learn how to shoot and merge a focus stack for massive depth-of-field.

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Improve your shooting knowledge with our in-depth guide to aperture.

50 MAKE YOUR OWN GEAR

Construct a light cube to capture top quality shots of reflective subjects.

52 SHOOT IT NOW



Take a beautiful nature shot of a sunrimmed leaf with this easy project.

54 WHY THIS SHOT WORKS

Expert insight on the secrets of success behind an effect-laden image.

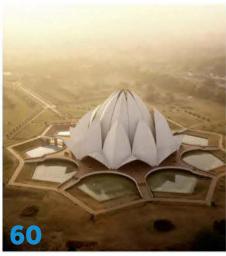
56 OUT OF THE ORDINARY

Take on the challenge of turning a square











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Avoid dirt and dust problems! Follow our easy guide to ensure your camera, lenses, filters and accessories are kept in pristine condition. Your pictures will thank you for it!

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Turn the wide end of a 'kit' lens into a fisheye optic using Photoshop's Warp tool.

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84 CREATE THEMED PORTRAITS

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Create arty animal images by seamlessly blending different natural elements together.

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The latest news from the digital world.

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We compare the photo features and quality of four of the latest phones.

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This CSC offers many of the features of the flagship NX1 at a more affordable price.

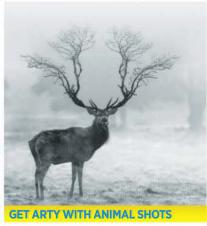
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The latest version of Lightroom adds new features, plus mobile and cloud capabilities.

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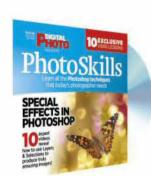
84 Create portraits with a new twist



72 Turn friends into UFO abductees



VIDEO TUTORIALS ON YOUR FREE CD





Pop the *PhotoSkills* CD in your PC or Mac and get set for a brilliant learning experience. There are 10 in-depth videos on the disc, and each one is created exclusively to help you master core imaging skills. This month, we help you master a variety of special effects in Photoshop, Elements and Lightroom. Watch the projects come to life on screen, and you'll be trying out the techniques in no time. It's a great way of learning and ensures you'll get the best out of your photography.



7 RETRO WITH RAW
Use the advanced controls in Lightroom to apply a vintage, cross-processed effect directly to a RAW file.



1 FOCUS STACKINGDiscover how to merge a sequence of pictures together to create a single image with a massive depth-of-field.



4 NATURAL EFFECTS Create beautiful nature scenes by blending a butterfly cutout with a virtual summer background.



8 BRING OUT THE SUN Enhance a high-contrast picture of a village scene to create summer warmth and atmosphere.



2 SCI-FI SCENES Create Hollywood-style visual effects by adding and re-lighting your own 'victim' in a UFO abduction scene!



5 THEMED PORTRAITS
Transform people pictures into arty
portraits by combining different shots
into a digital double exposure.



9 DAY TO NIGHT

Take a village scene in a different creative direction by turning it into a moody, moonlit shot.



3 DIGITAL FISHEYE Give any wide-angle lens a fisheye look using the powerful Warp tool in Photoshop CS6/CC.



6 SURREAL ANIMALS Fuse different pictures of natural elements together to create an artistic animal image with a twist!



10 DRONE SHOOTING
Discover the art of capturing aerial shots from camera drones with remote-piloting expert, Amos Chapple.

Also on your amazing interactive disc this month...







Use these files to practise the projects with your own software.

READER GALLERY Inspiring pics from Digital Photo readers.





5 FREE BONUS TUTORIALS
Make fantastic black & white images with
these extra imaging techniques.



DAVINCI RESOLVE 12

Now you can switch to the world's best editing software for free!

Only DaVinci Resolve 12 combines professional editing with advanced color correction so you can edit and grade from start to finish, all in one single software tool! With over 80 incredible new features including multicam editing, advanced trimming, high performance audio, and incredible media management, DaVinci Resolve 12 is the editing solution you've been waiting for.

Super Fast Editing

DaVinci Resolve 12 has a massive set of professional editing and trimming tools that work exactly as you expect. You get context sensitive editing, dynamic and asymmetric trimming, titling, transitions, animation and more! The familiar multi track timeline, customizable interface and keyboard shortcuts make it easy to switch to DaVinci Resolve 12.

Incredible Multicam

No matter how many cameras you have on your shoot, DaVinci Resolve 12 lets you edit programs shot on multiple cameras faster than ever before. Quickly sync angles using timecode, in/out points, or even automatically based on sound and then watch them all playback in realtime while you cut between angles on the fly!

Unlimited Audio Effects

Now you can create the perfect mix by adding VST and Audio Unit plugins to entire tracks or individual clips! Resolve's sample accurate playback and smooth tape style scrubbing let you precisely edit audio in the timeline, or you can record fader automation using the new mixer! You can even export directly to ProTools for finishing!

Hollywood's Best Color

DaVinci is the world's most trusted name in color and has been used to grade more Hollywood films, TV shows, and commercials than anything else. Now you can switch between professional editing and Resolve's legendary color tools with a single click. DaVinci Resolve 12 goes far beyond anything you'll find in any other editing systems!

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Planet Photo

Your fresh fix of inspiration from the world's best photographers

The world in slow-mo



The stunning setting of Doi Inthanon National Park in the Chiang Mai province of Thailand was used to create this jaw-dropping composite by Anek Suwannaphoom. Viewed over 200,000 times on 500px.com and one of

the site's most purchased images of the year, Anek shot the balloon images separately, before merging them into this beautiful sunrise backdrop.

Camera Canon EOS 5D MkII & 17-40mm lens Exposure 8secs @ f/16, ISO 100

Software Photoshop Visit 500px.com/anek2910





Go beneath the surface



Russia-based photographer **Andrey Narchuk** enjoyed a diving trip to remember while photographing in the Philippines recently. Andrey had visited the

crystal clear waters off Balicasag Island to shoot the varied and diverse marine life only to be greeted by an enormous school of Caranx fish. Because Caranx usually swim much deeper in the ocean, Andrey was surprised to witness such large swarms of the tropical fish just a metre or so below the ocean's surface.

The unusual position of the fish allowed Andrey to created a 'half and half' or 'split' image, capturing both the sub-aqua scene and the boat and sky above the surface. He achieved this by partially submerging the camera. Andrey had to work quickly as within minutes, the school of Caranx had engulfed him, placing him at the centre of their swirling

motion. With the fish surrounding him, the tight, compact formation seen above was no longer visible.

To achieve this dynamic composition, Andrey used his Canon EOS 5D Mkll with a 15mm fisheye lens. Both were placed inside a Nexus underwater housing, which allows photographers to adjust all the camera's exposure dials and settings while still protecting the body up to a depth of 75m.

Camera Canon 5D Mkll & 15mm fisheye Exposure 1/500sec @ f/5.6, ISO 400 Software Photoshop Visit 500px.com/narchuk

Get the shot

Four ways to shoot below the surface...



1 PRO HOUSING £1200

A pro housing offers the best protection and most versatility when shooting underwater.



2 POUCH BAGS £30

An affordable option that's better suited to pool work rather than deep ocean environments.



3 GO PRO FROM £90

The go-anywhere camera shoots 5Mp-12Mp stills (depending on model) and is waterproof to 40m.



4 WATERPROOF COMPACT FROM £150

Models like the Fuji XP80 or Olympus Tough are built for underwater use. but can be used normally too.



viewed 10 million times" Last month, views for Elena Shumilova's amazing portfolio of

child portraits topped 60 million! We asked for her top tips...

Get your kids to look natural

When photographing children, the single most important thing is to photograph them often- every day. You can't just do it sporadically, or they'll freeze up as soon as the camera comes out. Consistency is the key. That way they'll be comfortable around the camera. It's these everyday scenes that you want to capture - they're the ones you'll remember most of all when they grow up.

Choose the wardrobe carefully

I follow a pretty simple rule: clothing should never be distracting. They shouldn't take attention away from what's happening in the photograph.

For such a simple rule, it's harder to follow than you might think. Kids' clothes today are designed to grab your attention, with bright colours, cartoon characters, and slogans all over them. In photographs, all these things take the attention away from your kids.

When I started pursuing photography seriously, I actually replaced all my children's outfits. This took a while, but now I know anything I use won't interfere with the photo.

3 Mix your approach for different age groups Something I've noticed while photographing

many children - including my own - is that there seems to be a universal age between two and four when kids are the most photogenic. Kids this age behave very naturally.

It gets a bit more difficult when they're older and as early as age five, they start to become more self-conscious. The key here is to be very patient. Let them play while you disappear into the background. My best photos always happen at the end of a photo shoot, when my kids have forgotten all about the camera.

4 Don't give up
The most famous photo I've taken has been viewed over 10 million times - but I almost didn't bring my camera that day. Before I took this photo, my confidence was at a low point. I had tried to capture that one image 14 other times not 14 other photos, but 14 full photo shoots, all failures. Something told me to bring it on that 15th day, and it all just came together. Digital Photo spoke to Elena via SmugMug the world's largest independent photo-sharing platform. ■ Visit www.smugmug.com



Why it's time to take smartphones seriously

Out of the millions of images uploaded to photo-hosting giant *Flickr* last year, there was one camera used more than any other. It wasn't a Canon, Nikon, Sony, Panasonic or Olympus model. In fact, the three most used cameras were all Apple iPhones, with the most popular model being the 5s model. The only DSLR to come near the top was Canon's EOS 7D, which came home in fifth place.

Smartphone cameras have come of age and it's not hard to see why. Most have megapixel counts close to consumer-level DSLRs – in fact, the Nokia Lumia 1020 boasts a 40 megapixel sensor! What's more, with a sea of image

editing apps available (see below), photographers can shoot, edit and then share pictures to social media in a matter of seconds – all while enjoying the discretion and portability of the phone, rather than hauling around a heavy camera and a bagful of optics.

Smartphone images are also widely used in the media these days and not just by the general public who may be first on the scene of an incident. The most famous example was *Time* magazine using a cover image shot by photographer Ben Lowy on an iPhone 4s to illustrate the coverage of 2012's Hurricane Sandy and its destruction of New York.

Perhaps the purist in us tries to excuse the smartphone camera as a distraction that removes the skill from the art of image-making. But the most successful professionals will tell you that the best camera is always the one you have with you. The advances in smartphone picture-taking technology means that there's never any reason not to get the shot that captures a special moment – and that can only be a good thing for photography.

Tell us what you think about the rise of the smartphone camera? Have your say over on our Facebook page - www.facebook.com/digitalphotouk

Essentials

3 must-have imaging apps for your phone



1 SNAPSEED £FREE

Owned by Google, Snapseed is an all-in-one package that allows everything from simple tweaks to selective adjustments, and offers plenty of quick filters.



2 INSTAGRAM £FREE

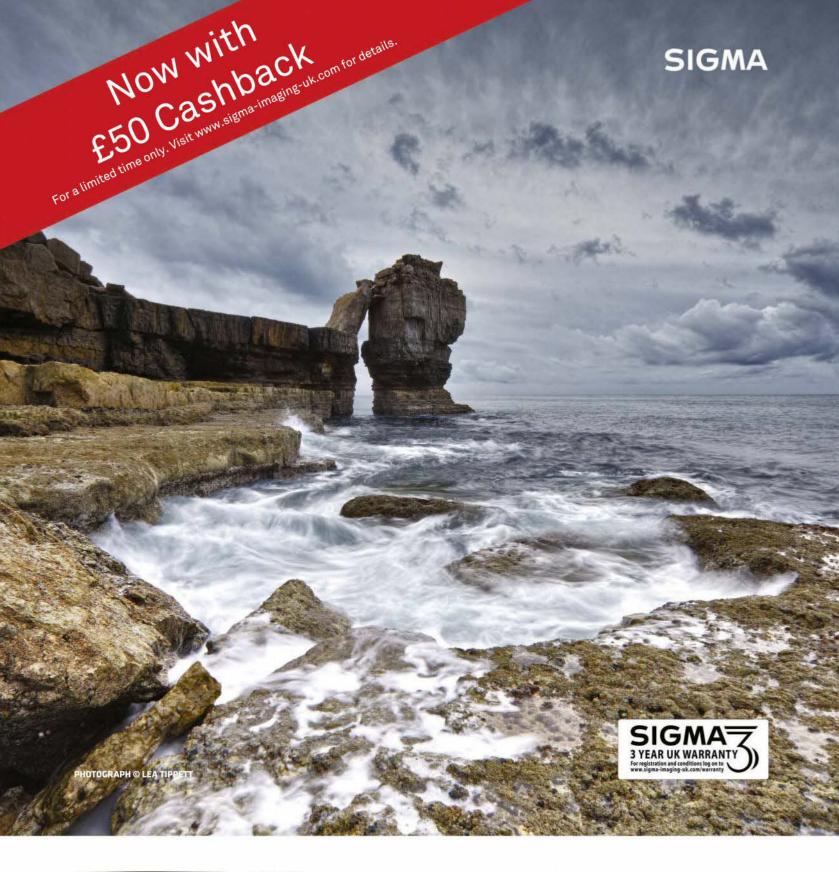
Perfect for no-nonsense retro effects and for sharing your images on social media. It's great vintage fun, but the square crops can be restrictive.



3 VSCO CAM EFREE

VSCO Cam helps photographers achieve authentic analogue film effects with ease. The app is free, but extra preset bundles start at a price around 79p.







SIGMA 10-20^{mm} F3.5 EX DC HSM

For Sigma. Canon, Nikon, Sony and Pentax Supplied with fitted padded case and petal type lens hood. Compatible with APS-C SLRs only. This super-wide angle zoom lens for digital SLR cameras has a maximum aperture of F3.5 throughout the entire zoom range and its super-wide angle enables breathtaking perspective and one-of-a-kind shots.

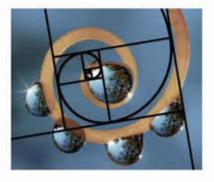
ELD (Extraordinary Low Dispersion) glass, SLD (Special Low Dispersion) glass and aspherical lenses provide excellent correction of all types of aberrations. The Super Multi-Layer Coating reduces flare and ghosting and the incorporation of HSM (Hyper-Sonic Motor) ensures a quiet and high-speed auto focus.



Fibonacci: the maths behind the spirals

The Fibonacci sequence is named after the Italian mathematician Leonardo Bonacci who introduced the idea to Western European mathematics in his 1202 book *Liber Abaci*. Each number in the sequence is found by adding the two preceding numbers. When squares with those widths are placed alongside each other, their corners create an aesthetically pleasing spiral.

The Fibonacci sequence appears in various natural phenomena, such as the branching of trees, the fruitlets of a



pineapple, the uncurling of a fern and the arrangement of a pine cone. To apply it to your own photography, try using Lightroom's Fibonacci Overlay when cropping your shots. Press the **R** key to activate the Crop tool and the **O** key to cycle through the overlays. Placing the main focal point of your shot over the centre of the spiral.

Fibonacci forest



Daniel Medalie was on vacation in Massachusetts when he had the idea for this eye-catching refraction shot. "I was walking near the beach and I noticed these cool creepers that

would collect rain drops," he explained.
"I decided to rearrange the elements by hand to get the perfect shot. I found a good spiral, attached it to a stick and planted it in the ground near a small forest. With an insulin syringe I placed drops on the vine and rotated the stick so I could see the forest and sun refracted clearly in each drop. I shot at f/22 to capture as much detail as I could in each drop."

Camera Sony Alpha 350 & 90mm f/2.8 macro lens
Exposure 1/125sec @ f/22, ISO 200 Software Photoshop
Web 500px.com/DMCleveland



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Your iPad and camera brought together by an innovative solution. Digital Director is the only Apple certified interface with a dedicated embedded micro-processor that helps you intuitively manage the entire photo and video workflow: from setting your Nikon and Canon DSLR to sharing your pictures via a tethered iPad application. It is suitable for iPad Air and iPad Air 2.









Out of this world selfies

While Alexandr's selfie makes your palms sweat, NASA take the crown for the highest-ever self-portraits. Here's four of the best...



THE 'SPACE WALK' SELFIE

Chris Cassidy had to add thermal protection to his Nikon D2Xs to cope with the extreme temperatures during a five-hour space walk.



THE 'LOOKING DOWN ON THE WORLD' SELFIE

NASA astronaut Tracy Caldwell Dyson looks through a window in the Cupola of the International Space Station.



THE 'LIVE TO THE WORLD' SELFIE

Rick Mastracchio used a Nikon D2Xs and a 17-35mm lens to capture this selfie during a televised interview.



THE 'REMEMBER TO SMILE' SELFIE

Tom Marshburn flashes a grin as he gazes down on the earth during a space walk outside the International Space Station.

All images copyright of NASA – see more NASA imagery at www.nasa.gov











It works for me!

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▲ **TRUCK BLUR**by Colin Thompson



From: Wigan, Lancashire

Tell us about your image: I'd been looking for an appropriate subject to try out the 'Add an exciting rush of speed' since I saw it in the Spring 2014 issue. Then a friend, Simon Powell, sent me a shot he'd taken of a truck in America and I knew it would look great with the technique applied. First I added some Zoom Blur to the road pic supplied with the magazine, before cutting out the truck and pasting it onto the road. I grounded the truck by painting in a shadow and span the wheels using Radial

Blur. The final touch was cloning out the reflections in the truck's paintwork and windows.





Recreating the look of a tracking shot using Photoshop's tools.









Balancing exposure across a scene in the Spring 2015 issue.

≺BIG BEN by Adam Keeble

From: Benfleet, Essex

Tell us about your image: When I took this shot with my Fujifilm X100s, the camera captured the detail in the building but, because of the angle of the sun, the clouds in the sky were completely bleached out. Following the 'Get a perfectly balanced exposure' technique in the

Spring 2015 issue, I opened the file in Adobe Camera Raw and adjusted the exposure with the sliders to best suit Big Ben. I then used the Adjustment Brush tool to selectively bring back detail in the sky. I found that by using a graphics tablet I was able to apply adjustments accurately to very small parts of the image. This helped me get a good result.

SAN JUAN by Declan Reilly

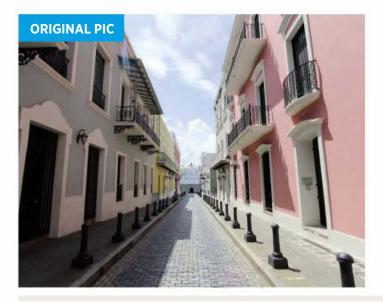


From: Basel, Switzerland Tell us about your image: After seeing the November 2014 issue, I was inspired to begin my journey into

HDR photography. Having never tried shooting bracketed exposures, I was interested to see the single JPEG technique to 'Brighten shadows for the HDR look'. I took this shot in San Juan, Puerto Rico with my Canon EOS



600D and first made some adjustments to the Levels and Saturation in Elements. Then I opened the image into the Photomatix software and altered the settings for a balance of an artistic but still realistic image with high impact.







▲ **STANTHORPE STARS** by Clive Fox



From: Queensland, Australia
Tell us about your image: After reading the 'Shoot space and time' article in the Spring 2015 edition of the mag, I thought I would send in this image I shot in Stanthorpe, Queensland. It demonstrates another way of shooting star trail images. Contrary to your method of setting up multiple 30secs exposures and

then blending them in Photoshop, this image is one exposure of around 20 minutes with ISO at 400 and an aperture of f/8, taken with my Nikon D4 and 24-70mm lens. I set my ISO to 400 and used an aperture of f/8.





A NORWEGIAN SUNSET by David Neagle



From: Willenhall, West Midlands Tell us about your image: I have to confess to not taking the original shot used to make this image.

My friend, Linda Vabo, has an Irish



Wolfhound and lives in Norway. With the stunning Norwegian countryside as a backdrop she took this shot of her dog Corinne with her Fujifilm X100s, and then sent it to me so I could apply some effects in Elements 12. Inspired by the 'Build a fantasy sunset silhouette' idea in the March 2015 issue, I adjusted the Hue/Saturation and added a Layer Mask to remove distracting sunlight in the foreground before adding lens flare and light lines in Layer Masks.



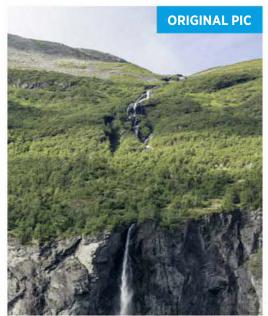


GJERDEFOSSEN WATERFALL by Jeff Price



From: Blackburn, Lancashire
Tell us about your image: Sailing out of a
fjord in Norway, I had no time to change
lenses to a wide-angle to capture the full
scale of the waterfall with my Canon EOS
7D. So I shot four images, starting at the top,
leaving overlap on each. When I saw the

'Create a stunning vertorama!' technique in the June 2015 issue, it gave me the steps to piece together my images. I used the Photomerge command and, once my images were combined, I cropped the image and cloned in part of the sky that I had missed in capture. The resulting image truly represents the scale of this stunning waterfall.



Lexar kit up for grabs send in your best shots now!

There's a superb Lexar Professional memory card and a Lexar Professional 25-in-1 USB 3.0 Card Reader for every reader featured in *It Works For Me*, so make sure you send your pics in to us at *dpimages@bauermedia*. *co.uk* At £101.99, the 16GB Lexar Professional 1066x CompactFlash memory card delivers read speeds of up to 160MB/s. Alternatively, at £41.99, the 16GB 633x SDHC UHS-1 card gives a massive 95MB/sec read/write speed. Each winner also scoops a Lexar Professional USB 3.0 25-in-1 Card Reader – a professional-level, portable USB reader providing high-speed file transfer, worth £30.99.



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AMAZING READER OFFER





The attachment offers both 1/4in and 3/8in screw threads for cameras and pro tripod heads.



The monopod is supplied with a convenient key for tightening the leg locks.



The rugged, high quality leg locks allow the height to be adjusted from 62.5 to 157cm.

HIS MANFROTTO monopod is perfect for giving extra support and stability when you're shooting. Made from aluminium, it's strong and lightweight, and sports a rubber grip plus a wrist strap for easy carrying. The closed length of 62.5cm extends to a maximum height of 157cm, giving a versatile platform for your camera that's quick and easy to set up. You can directly attach your camera to the 1/4in screw thread, or can fit a tripod head to the retractable 3/8in thread for even more flexibility. This monopod is a must for wildlife, sports and action photography. It's worth £54, but we're including one with a 13-issue subscription, so take advantage and pick up an absolute bargain!

Dan Mold Technical Editor, Digital Photo



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CARRY LIGHT SHOOT RIGHT

There are times when you just can't take everything with you. Here's how to improvise on the fly and survive a summer shoot!

HERE'S NO DENYING THAT accessories make capturing creative shots a lot easier and can help you improve your results.

However, the truth is there will be times, particularly when you're far from home, when it's just not possibly to carry tripods, flash units, extra lenses and all your other heavy gear. If you're on holiday, most landmarks you'll visit won't even

allow the use of tripods. So it's well worth learning how to survive when stripped to the basics and use your camera to its full potential.

What's more, many simple, everyday items can be used as substitutes for tripods and reflectors to ensure you still come home with a memory card full of great 'keepers' to remind you of those precious holiday adventures.





Carry light, shoot right



ways to set up your camera for success

Creative, all-singing cameras like DSLRs and CSCs can be daunting. There are so many options, switches, dials and modes available that many enthusiasts stop at the very bottom of the learning curve and stick it on Auto or Program mode. This is a mistake, as you're relinquishing all control to the engineer who programmed your

camera model. And they're not the person framing up through the viewfinder!

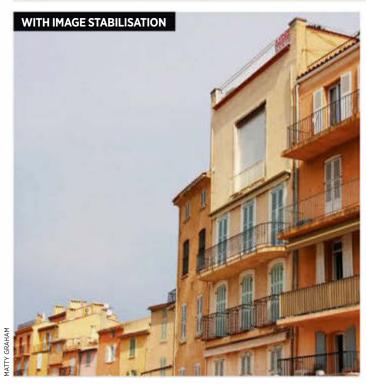
In the maze of settings and options, there are a few core things to bear in mind, and if you set up your camera correctly, you'll be covered for most photo moments that come your way.

Stick to aperture priority

When you're presented with a photo opportunity and need to work fast, the best exposure mode to use is Aperture priority. Aperture priority (A or Av on the main mode dial) allows you to select the f-stop, and leaves the camera to work out the appropriate shutter speed. The advantage of Aperture priority is than you'll always get the camera's best guess at a balanced exposure, and you can always take a shot.

By swiftly dialling in your lowest f-number, you'll achieve the tightest band of sharpness around your focal point, and will also get the fastest shutter speed for the light conditions. If you dial in the highest f-number, you'll get the deepest band of sharp focus, and the slowest possible shutter speed. By using Aperture priority, you can control your zone of sharpness and your shutter speed – and that's all you need to consider for the majority of shots you'll take.

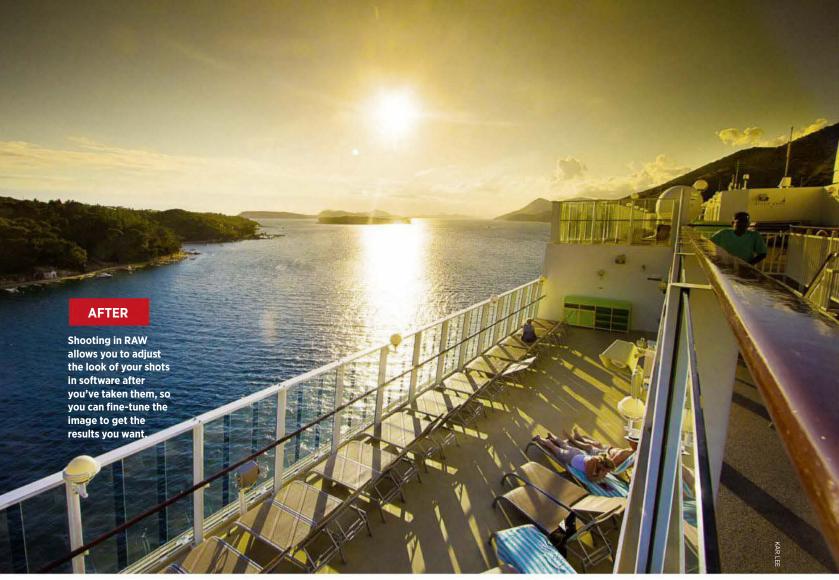






Use image stabilisation (IS) technology 🝐

When you're handholding a camera, camera shake causes blur in your pictures, reducing their quality and impact. More recent cameras or lenses feature image stabilisation systems that combat shake to give sharp shots when using slower-than-normal shutter speeds. If your camera body or lens has a stabiliser, switch it on to get better results whenever you're handholding. The only time you need to switch it off is if you're fixing or resting the camera in place so it can't move.



op Shoot RAW all the time extstyle op

When you're considering the timing, the light, the composition, and the multitude of elements that go into a single picture, it's easy to get a few factors wrong and end up blowing the shot. If you shoot in your camera's RAW format though, you can control the vital ingredients of a shot like contrast, colour balance and exposure afterwards, when you process the picture in RAW conversion software. Provided you expose to preserve the picture's highlights – and you can look at the screen to check this – you can enhance the rest afterwards. This makes RAW the most versatile format you can use, so set it now and stick to RAW capture from this moment on. See p34 for more on RAW conversion.



Explore your focusing modes

Cameras are equipped with a variety of different focusing modes, from automated options where the camera decides what to focus on, to fully manual settings where you turn the focusing ring on the lens. What part of the subject you want to hold in sharp focus is down to you – not your camera – so you need to be in charge of focusing. The first step is to set your camera's focusing to single point. This means that the sole AF target point you select in the viewfinder will be the one used. Once you've

done this, there are only two focusing modes to worry about: Single and Continuous (One Shot and AI Servo on Canon models). If your subject is static, use Single AF/One Shot, and if it moves, use Continuous AF/AI Servo. That's all you need to remember!

When you're travelling light, you seldom have room to carry more than one lens. This may feel limiting, but picking the optic that suits the style of photos you normally take will

Fit your most versatile lens >

photos you normally take will yield the best results. For most photographers, a 'standard zoom' will be the best option for general use. Entry-level cameras usually come with a kit lens that

extends from 18-55mm (the full-frame equivalent is 28-80mm). Mid-range cameras often come with lenses with a bit more

ONE SHOT ALFOCUS ALSERVO



reach, such as 18-105mm. Either of these will be ideal for a one-lens outfit, though superzooms like 18-200mm or 16-300mm models give the coverage of several lenses in one, compact unit.

Carry light, shoot right

Capture brilliant shots, whatever the weather

One thing we have little control over is the weather. You might think strong sunshine is a good thing, but when it comes to photography, it can lead to flare. Alternatively, when the heavens open, rain can stop play. Don't panic - both issues can be sorted with a little know-how...

THE PROBLEM

CAMERAS AND RAIN DON'T GET ALONG



A FREEZER BAG

Keeping a zip-lock freezer bag and a rubber band in your jacket takes up no space at all, but can save your camera from any rain damage and allow you to keep shooting during a shower. Simply open the bag and place your camera inside so the lens points outwards and secure it in place using the rubber band.



A MICROFIBRE TOWEL

It's worth keeping a small microfibre towel in your pocket or bag. Available from outdoor shops, they can be rolled up tight to save on space, and will soak up splashes on your lens, screen and camera body, leaving you free to continue shooting. Wash it after every use to keep it free of grease and grime.



SILICA GEL

If you know you're going to be shooting on a rainy day, rifle through an old shoe box or even the box your camera came in and find a packet of silica gel. The tiny sachets absorb moisture so stick one in your jacket pocket with the camera when you're moving between locations to add an extra level of protection.





TOP TIP 'Chimp' the keepers to save space

When shooting in challenging weather, it's likely you'll get as many misses as hits, and the misses take up valuable space on your memory card - particularly if you are shooting larger RAW files. When you have time between shots, look through your pictures critically and delete the ones that haven't worked. Never get rid of shots that may have potential, but be ruthless and delete the ones that don't. Out-of-focus, overexposed and otherwise useless shots will never make the grade, and disposing of them now will free up card space and save you editing time later. Keeping to this practice frees up your memory cards for the good stuff!

SUNLIGHT CAN INTRODUCE LENS FLARE







Even if you have a lens hood fitted, it won't always be deep enough to shield your lens from contrast-sapping flare. To make a quick flare-buster, grab a dry paper coffee cup and turn it upside down. Use scissors, a pocket knife or even your keys to chop out the bottom, leaving a circular hole.



Next, use your keys or knife again to carefully slice all the way down the side of the cup – take your time with this part. Making this second cut is particularly important if you are using a larger diameter lens, as it will allow the cup to fit over the barrel so you can freely twist the lens to adjust your focal length.



With the cup over the lens, turn it so that the cut you've made is on the opposite side to your light source. This will prevent light getting through the gap and causing flare. Slide the cup so it blocks any rays, but isn't extended so far that it intrudes into the frame. Check the screen after a quick test shot to confirm it's clear of the picture.



THE PROBLEM

DURING EVENING OR INDOOR SHOOTING, LOW LIGHT LEVELS WILL EXTEND YOUR SHUTTER SPEED AND CAUSE BLURRED PICS



GO WIDE

Sharp shots are possible for most photographers when the shutter speed is the reciprocal of the focal length you're using. At a zoom setting of 60mm, you'll need 1/60sec, but at a focal length of 30mm, you'll need just 1/30sec because there's less magnification. By zooming back to your widest angle, you can get sharper shots at slower shutter speeds. So shoot wide to stay sharp!





GET STABLE

Camera shake is caused by movement during the exposure. When shooting, look around for something to keep your camera as stable as possible. Fences, furniture, lampposts or railings can all be used for support. If you can't place the camera on something directly, stabilise yourself by leaning against anything solid like trees or walls.



MAKE A MONOPOD

Carry a 2m length of string, and you can fashion a monopod that's surprisingly effective. Loop one end around your lens and stand on the other end so it's held taught at your shooting height. By reducing movement in the vertical plane, you've set up an effective system that can give sharp shots at much slower shutter speeds.

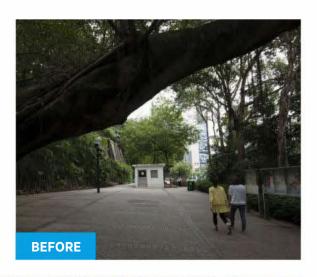
Carry light, shoot right

Get vibrant, well-balanced exposures in the toughest lighting conditions

Light is a photographer's best friend, but it can also work against you. If it comes from the wrong direction, it'll hide subjects in shadows, while mixed lighting can unbalance a shot and flummox a metering system. All is not lost though, as using your camera's features, everyday items and image-editing software will overcome these issues, leaving you with the quality shots you wanted.

THE PROBLEM

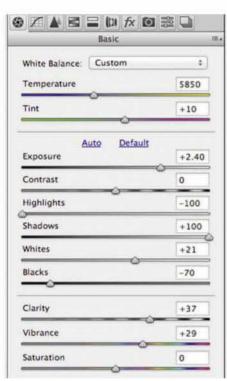
BACKLIT OR HIGH CONTRAST SCENES CAN LEAVE YOUR CAMERA STRUGGLING TO BALANCE THE EXPOSURE





THE SOLUTION

Shooting in RAW format doesn't change the way you take pictures, but it's an absolute life-saver when you're back at your computer. RAW files are larger than JPEGs, and contain much more image data. In RAW conversion software, you can use this to reveal the detail in underexposed areas, and to tone down overly-bright highlights, rescuing unbalanced, high contrast shots. Load your RAW into Adobe Camera Raw (it's built into Photoshop and Elements) and click on the Basic tab. Boost Shadows to restore detail hidden in the dark, and reduce Highlights to compress the brightest tones. After this, adjusting the Exposure, Whites and Blacks sliders will get your pics looking punchy. Because the colours in a RAW file aren't fixed, you can then adjust the White Balance via the Temperature slider, and also pep up the colour intensity using the Vibrance and Saturation controls.



Adjusting the sliders in Camera Raw will help restore balance to high contrast scenes.





USE FLASH

One way of reducing harsh shadows on a subject's face is to fill them with flash. You won't be carrying a weighty flash unit, so use the pop-up flash on your camera. You can adjust its power by holding down the flash icon button and turning the command wheel.



USE A REFLECTOR

Bouncing light back with a reflector is a great method of controlling the light on a subject. You most likely won't have one to hand, so a great DIY alternative is to use some tin foil. A sheet will fold up small, taking little space. Just open it out and angle it at your subject.



USE EXPOSURE COMPENSATION

In tricky lighting cameras can struggle to meter correctly. If your shot is too dark or too bright on screen, use Exposure Compensation (the +/- button) then reshoot to fix it. Dialling in a positive amount will make a pic brighter, and a negative amount will darken it.





SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND





Set up your tripod, achieve focus and switch to Manual Focus

Place your camera close to your foreground subject and frame up. Make sure the foreground interest isn't closer than your lens' minimum focus distance. With the camera on a tripod, position the AF point over the foreground. Half-press the shutter to focus, and then switch your camera and/or lens to Manual Focus. Make sure your camera is securely locked off on the tripod, as it must not move from this point onwards. If your image stabiliser is activated, switch it off. If you're shooting in JPEG format, choose the most appropriate White Balance setting for the conditions (eg. Daylight etc).



Choose the right exposure mode, take a test shot and check exposure

Select Aperture Priority mode (A or Av) and dial in an aperture value of f/11. This will give the sharpest performance from your lens and a medium depth-of-field, but the zone of sharpness won't be enough to cover the entire scene. Set your ISO to the lowest value (normally 100). Fire the shutter and check the screen to see that your shot is well-exposed. If you need to make it brighter or darker, now's the time to do it. To brighten the scene, hold down the Exposure Compensation button (denoted by a +/- icon) and dial in +1. Use a setting of -1 to make it darker.

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SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND



Delete test shots and set the Self-timer

Once you've established the ideal exposure, quickly delete all your test shots. If you leave them on the memory card, it'll be confusing once you get to the editing stage, so it makes sense to get rid of them now. When you've done this, set your camera's Drive mode to the Self-timer setting and dial in a delay of 2secs. This will let the camera settle before firing and will prevent you from jogging it and causing shake when you press the shutter button. If you have a remote shutter release, use this instead of the Self-timer and you'll save 2secs on every shot! Now fire the camera to take the first picture.



Take shots at different focusing distances

Gently turn the focusing ring until it's set to a distance of around 1m. You don't need to look through the viewfinder. Take a second shot using the same camera settings. Increase the focus distance to 3m, and shoot again. Take another shot at around 7m, and then another at the Infinity (∞) setting. These numbers aren't precise and will vary with the lens you use – just go with the numbers in the distance window. What's important is to cover the entire scene, with the zone of sharpness overlapping between each shot. Three or four shots often suffice, but it's common to take six or seven in a landscape focus stack. When you've captured your sequence, the shooting part of the technique is complete.

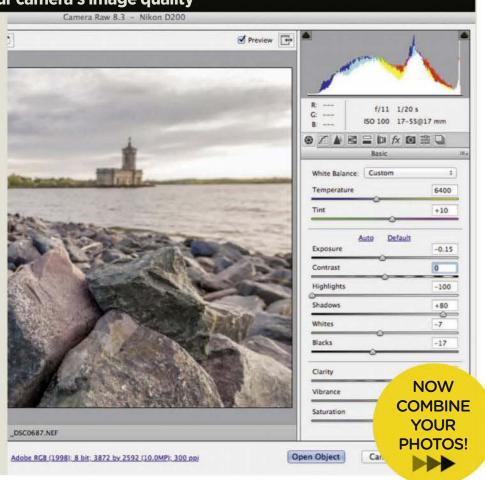
Shoot in RAW to maximise your camera's image quality

Since you're going for a very high quality image, it makes sense to shoot in the format that allows you to get the best results. All D-SLRs and CSCs offer a RAW format, and many compacts do too. If you shoot in RAW, you record a file that comes straight off the camera's sensor, and hasn't been subjected to too much in-camera processing.

With a RAW file, you can adjust many of the parameters that are the fundamental building blocks of a picture. For starters, the colours aren't fixed, but are floating, so you can fine-tune the White Balance to suit your subject long after you've taken the shot.

You can also add or reduce contrast, increase or decrease the brightness of the highlights and shadows in the scene, and even adjust the overall exposure. All these changes are made in special RAW software, such as the Camera Raw plugin that's built into Photoshop and Elements.

Opening the file into your software will automatically load the Camera Raw interface, and changes are made by simply moving the various sliders in the control panel. Once you've adjusted one file in your focus stack sequence to your liking, click on Open Image and the changes will be saved. You can then apply exactly the same settings you've used to subsequent files by opening them and selecting Previous Conversion from the flyout menu at the top right of the control panel.



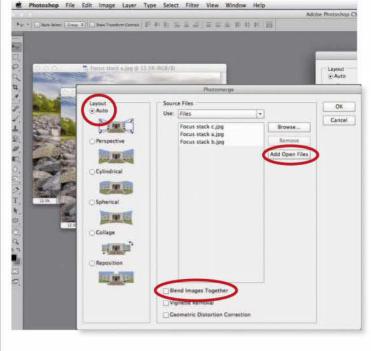


COMBINE THE SEQUENCE IN PHOTOSHOP

Merge your shots together to get a scene that's sharp all the way through. Clean results aren't guaranteed with automated options, so here's how to blend the pictures manually to keep you in full control





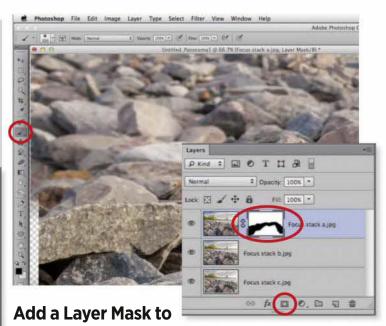


Select your shots and load them up

Open your shots into Photoshop or Elements, and inspect them for the focus depth they cover. You may find three shots are sufficient to keep the whole scene sharp, or you may need more – it depends on the lens you used and how close the subject was to its minimum focusing distance. With all your shots on screen, close down any you don't need, leaving the others open. Go to Enhance→Photomerge Panorama in Elements, or File→Automate→Photomerge in Photoshop. In the dialogue box, choose the Auto option on the left and click Add Open Files to see your pics listed. At the bottom, make sure Blend images together is NOT ticked, then click OK.



palette on screen). If you shot the pictures in the order suggested, your focus point will be closest on the top Layer and furthest away on the bottom Layer. The content of the Layers will be aligned as part of this process. This is needed because the focal length of a lens changes very slightly between the minimum and the maximum focusing distance. The alignment may not be absolutely perfect, but if you switch off the 'eye' icons alongside the Layers from the top down, you can see how good a job it has done.



With all the Layers' 'eye' icons switched back on, click on the top
Layer to make it active and then click the Add Layer Mask icon.
Hit D then X to set the foreground colour to black, and select the
Brush tool. Zoom into the image with Ctrl+Plus, and find the point
where the focus just drops off beyond the sharp foreground area.
Paint here to see the sharpness come through from the Layer beneath, and

move across the image, until you have a line of sharpness at the focus breakoff point that blends the two pictures together seamlessly.



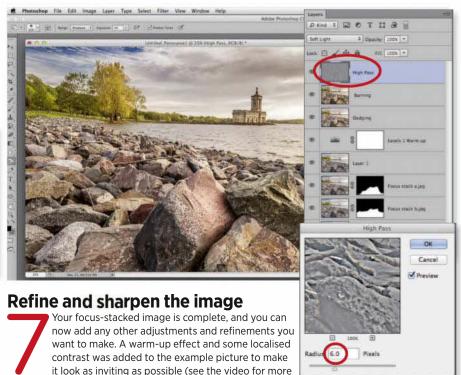
You may find that the frame edges don't match, and you have a gap around the edge. This is a result of the focal length differences. Don't worry about it as you can get rid of this later. Zoom back and you can use a big brush to fill the area above your 'blend' line with black. To do this quickly, hold Alt and click on the Layer Mask thumbnail in the Layers palette. This will show just the Mask itself. Paint black into it, and when you've finished, Alt+click on the same Layer Mask thumbnail to return to the normal view. To fill the area even more quickly, select the area above the line with the Lasso tool, and hit Alt+Backspace to fill it with your black foreground colour.



Click on the next Layer down and add a Layer Mask to it by clicking on the icon as before. Paint black into this in the same way, after zooming in to the image and finding the break-off point in sharpness. Once you've created a line all the way across the image, double-click the Hand tool to get the image full screen, and fill out the area above your line with black. Do this same masking and painting process with any additional Layers you have. Leave the bottom Layer alone, as that won't need a Mask added to it. The example above has a stack of three Layers, but you may have four or five depending on your subject.



When you've completed your masking, you'll see transparent gaps around the edge of the frame. This is a result of the focal length of the lens becoming longer as the focus distance is increased. To remove these gaps, click on the top Layer, then hit Ctrl+Shift+Alt+E to merge all the Layers into a new one. Now hit Ctrl+T to go into Free Transform mode, and pull out the handles to enlarge the image and cover the gaps. In Elements, make sure that Constrain Proportions is NOT ticked in the Tool Options bar before doing this. Hit Return to confirm the changes.



on this). To make the most of the huge depth-of-field, the



MASTER YOUR CAMERA

Every month, we explore a key feature found on creative cameras like DSLRs or CSCs, and reveal what it does and how you can use it to boost your skills



APERTURE

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY JON ADAMS

O RECORD A GOOD EXPOSURE of any scene onto a camera's imaging chip, there are three variables that come into play. The first is the amount of time the light is allowed to hit the sensor, the second is the size of the 'hole' in the lens that lets the light through, and the third is how sensitive to light the sensor is.

The first variable is governed by the shutter speed, the second by the aperture setting chosen, and the third is covered by the ISO control. We'll be looking at shutter speed and ISO later in this series, but right now, we'll be focusing firmly on aperture.

What is aperture?

Inside every lens is an adjustable diaphragm that opens and closes to let more or less light

F/numbers

describe the ratio

between the hole

in the lens and the

focal length

through. How much you can open it is governed by the lens, and this maximum aperture setting is stated on the barrel. If there's just one setting, such as 1:3.5, then the lens is either a prime lens with a fixed focal length, or a high-end zoom lens that allows the same amount of light through, regardless of the zoom setting.

When two numbers are stated, such as



The maximum aperture available depends on the lens used, but is stated on the barrel.

1:3.5-5.6, it means the lens is a variable aperture zoom. It will offer a maximum of f/3.5 at the widest zoom setting, but will drop down to f/5.6 at the long end. This happens because the extension created by zooming in reduces its light-gathering ability.

Where do f/numbers come from?

Aperture is denoted by f/numbers, such as f/2.8, f/4, f/5.6 and so on. These aren't arbitrary numbers – they actually describe the ratio between the diameter of the hole in the diaphragm and the focal length of the lens. A setting of f/2 on a 50mm lens would have a aperture 25mm across (50/2), and a setting of f/4 on a 100mm lens would also have a hole measuring 25mm (100/4). Since this gives us the same size hole from two very

different lenses and settings, it'd be confusing to talk about aperture as a physical measurement. If we did, the numbers would vary for every different focal length. So instead we use the ratio derived from them.

This ratio remains constant for every lens available, so if a good exposure is taken using

f/8 at 1/125sec, then that will be the case for *all* lenses, regardless of the focal length or the type of camera used. This means that the exposure settings used to get a good shot on your camera will give an equally good exposure when transferred to another.

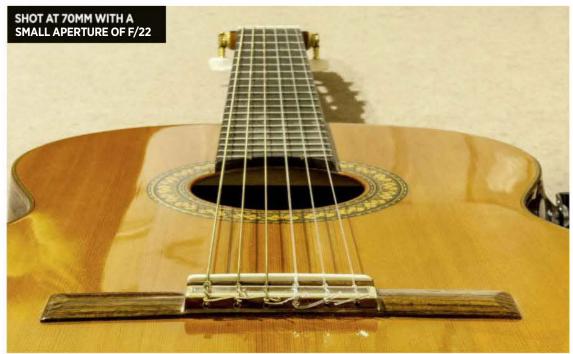
There's a sequence of 'full' f-stops worth learning, and each 'stop' represents a halving or doubling of the area of the hole in the diaphragm. As you close the aperture by a stop, halving the area lets exactly half the light through, so when you get to your smallest aperture, you're left with a tiny hole that only allows a trickle of light to pass.

Taking control of your aperture setting



In the past, the aperture value was adjusted mechanically and set by rotating a physical control ring situated on the lens barrel. This was marked up with the different aperture settings, so if you wanted to shoot at f/8. You simply rotated the ring to the f/8 setting. Nowadays, the majority of cameras set the aperture value electronically via a command dial on the camera body. The value is displayed on the screen or on the top-plate LCD and is also shown in the viewfinder so you can adjust it without taking your eye off your composition. More advanced DSLRs and CSCs feature twin command dials - one for aperture and the other for shutter speed, whereas many entry-level models only have one command dial. This adjusts aperture or shutter speed, depending on which exposure mode you have set on the main mode dial.



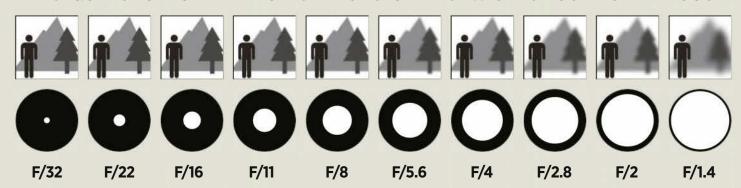


The effect aperture has on your pics



As well as letting more or less light through to allow good exposures in brighter or darker levels of lighting, the aperture setting you choose also produces an effect that changes the way shots look. By opening or closing the diaphragm, you narrow or deepen the zone of sharp focus in a picture. This zone is known as the depth-of-field, and by setting different aperture values, you can by control the way your pictures look. A large aperture setting (a lower f/ number such as f/2.8 or f/4), will give a very shallow zone of sharpness around the point of focus. At the other end of the scale, a small aperture (a higher f/ number like f/16 or f/22), will give a much deeper zone of sharpness, holding much more of the subject in focus.

THE SEQUENCE OF FULL APERTURES - EACH STOP LETS TWICE AS MUCH LIGHT THROUGH





Getting to grips with depth-of-field

The zone or band

of sharp focus in a

pic is referred to as

the depth-of-field

With a single shot, you can only focus on one specific point in a scene. Any points at exactly the same distance from the camera will be equally sharp, but others, nearer or further from the camera will be less so. While this is simple enough to grasp, it doesn't account for images you've seen that are sharp right the way through, from the foreground interest to the detail in the distance.

By using a large aperture setting – denoted by a low f/number such as f/2.8 or f/4, you get a very tight band of sharp focus, so only the parts of the scene at the distance you've set the focus will be sharp. Close down the aperture to a medium

setting of f/8, and more of the scene will appear sharply focused. This increased band of sharpness will extend both towards and away from the focus point.

If you then close the aperture to its

minimum setting – normally f/22 on most lenses – the band of sharpness will be at its greatest and will extend nearly all the way through the scene. The zone of sharp focus is referred to as the *depth-of-field*, and the aperture setting is the feature that controls it.

The downside of using a very small aperture is that you're only allowing a tiny amount of

light to pass through the lens. To compensate for this, you need to give a longer time for a well-exposed image to be made. This means that shots using a small aperture require a longer shutter speed than those with a large aperture. Depending on how bright the lighting is, this may mean

that the shutter speed extends to a second or more – too long to handhold a camera. This makes a tripod essential for many shots with a big depth-of-field, as the long exposure will result in camera shake when handholding.

Depth-of-field preview

Many DSLRs have a button that momentarily closes down the aperture to show you an approximation of the depth-of-field in a shot in the viewfinder. On film cameras of old, this was the only way to take the guesswork out of the process, but nowadays, with a screen on the back of every camera, it's no longer essential.

It usually takes the same time to fire off a test shot and assess the depth of sharpness on the screen as it does to hold down a button and squint through a darkened viewfinder, so you can ignore this button and assess your depth-of-field with a quick test shot.

Aperture setting



Large aperture



Medium aperture



Small aperture

How to set up your camera



Set f/number to lowest value



Set f/number to f/8 or f/11



Set f/number to highest value

Use this setting for



Isolating a subject in a scene



General photography



Getting front-to-back sharpness



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Creative aperture use

Controlling the depth-of-field in your shots is one of the most important aspects of creative photography. It's quick and easy to do, and mastering the process will give you a real 'eureka' moment on your path to better pics!



Set up your shot

Find a subject reasonably close to the camera, and make sure there's a distance of at least a few metres between it and your background. With your camera on a tripod, compose your shot and focus on the subject by placing the active AF point over it and half pressing the shutter. Once you've established focus, switch the focusing selector switch to MF to lock the focusing distance. This will prevent the focus from changing, so your results will be determined by the aperture setting alone. Through the viewfinder, you'll see the pic at maximum aperture, so your background will look blurred.



Shoot at your maximum aperture

Now set your main mode dial to Aperture priority (A or Av). Rotate
your command dial until you've set the largest aperture available.
This is governed by the lens you have attached, and will be the
lowest f/number. On an 18-55mm kit lens, this will be between f/3.5 and f/5.6
depending on how far zoomed-in you are. Once you've done this, take the
shot. Check the screen and you'll see the image appears exactly the same as
in the viewfinder, with a sharp subject and a fuzzy, out-of-focus background.
Your shutter speed will vary, but make a mental note of it.



Shoot at your minimum aperture Now rotate the command dial until

you've set the highest f/number. This is the minimum aperture value and is again governed by the lens you're using. On most lenses this will be f/22, but it could vary between f/16 and f/64 depending on what optic you have fitted, and how far zoomed in you are. Check the shutter speed in the viewfinder, and you'll see that it's much slower than your previous shot. This is a result of the aperture being closed to let the minimum amount of light through.

The image in the viewfinder won't change, but take another shot, and when you check the screen you'll see that the zone of sharpness now extends much deeper into the scene, despite the lens being focused in exactly the same place.

Once you've run this easy exercise, think about the aperture value you use on every shot you take. Decide what your shot is about, and what you're trying to express. This will help you choose between a large aperture that isolates the point of focus in a shallow band of sharpness, or a small aperture that gives great a great depth-of-field through the entire scene.





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BUILD A DIY LIGHT CUBE

Make your own top-class photo kit for next to nothing!

eFLECTIONS CAN BE A BLESSING or a real headache for photographers. And if you've ever tried to shoot a shiny object such as an item of jewellery, a gleaming model car or a chrome kettle, you'll be more than familiar with the latter.

There's no denying that reflections offer a great way of shooting creatively, and a portrait in glass, or a mountain in a lake can make a striking shot. But for glossy-looking

product shots, reflections are distracting. So how do you stop the surrounding room from appearing in your subject's surfaces? Well, a light cube is a professional solution. The large semi-transparent walls of the cube act as diffusers to give soft, even lighting and gentle shadows. They also reduce harsh reflections so you get a cleaner shot as a result.

Light cubes start at around £30 but can easily run into hundreds as the size of the

cube is increased. It's a lot of money if you don't shoot these types of images regularly or you're unsure of the benefits.

The great news is a light cube is easy to make at home using stuff you already have. Although not as robust nor as portable as a commercially-available cube, our home-made variant will give tremendous results, and you can choose the cube size and customise your background colour to match your subject.





You will need

- 1x cardboard box
- 1x pair of scissors
- 1x roll of parcel
- tape
- 1x ruler and pencil
- 1x roll of white baking paper
- 1x sheet of paper

Time needed: 20mins

Four simple steps to a light cube studio



Find a suitable cardboard box
Choose a cardboard box big enough for the type of subjects you want to shoot – a smaller box with a base around A4 in size will be ideal for small items and jewellery. Cut off the four flaps that make up the box's lid – these may be at the top or at one end depending on which way it opens. Then make sure the other sides are taped up securely as these need to have a decent amount of rigidity. This open side will be the part you shoot through.



Draw your windows and cut them out
Pick a side of the box that shares an edge with the opening you've
made. Draw a line approximately 10cm inside the edges using a
ruler. Repeat this on the other two sides that share an edge with the
opening. Cut out the inner rectangle you've just drawn with a pair of scissors.
The windows you're left with will be where your diffused light panels will be
added. Use some tape to reinforce the corners if needed.



Add a background infinity curve

Tape a large sheet of paper to the top of the back wall inside the cube. Let it arc down to form an infinity curve and then secure it with tape to the front lip of the cube. You may need to trim your paper to fit or use multiple sheets depending on the size of your cube. You don't have to use white paper, but as other sheets can be added on top, it's a good base.



Tape on your diffusers

White baking paper costs around £2 for a 15m roll and is perfect for diffusing harsh light and reducing reflections. Unroll a length over a side of the box with an opening and cut it off. Make sure it covers the entire window, and use some tape to stick it in position. Repeat this for the remaining two windows, so you have three diffused panels.

Using your light cube

It's best to set up on a tripod when shooting with a light cube because the soft, diffused light will require a longer shutter speed. For a light source you can use anything – sunlight, desklamps, or flashguns. The light source itself isn't too important as your diffusion panels will soften it into an even glow.

Place your subject in the middle of the infinity curve and you'll get fantastic shots without distracting reflections. To change the style of your images, try lighting from the top or one side only, and experiment with different coloured paper for the background.





CAPTURE THE DETAIL IN A SUNLIT LEAF

TECHNIQUE & PIC BY JON ADAMS

HEN YOU TAKE A SHOT, YOU DON'T photograph the subject itself – you photograph the light that falls on it. Keep this idea in the back of your mind, and new avenues of photography suddenly start opening up before your eyes. Beautiful light means beautiful pictures, however ordinary a subject may be. With the right lighting, something as simple as a leaf reveals an intricate word of patterns and detail, and if you can surround it with a glowing halo, you'll bag a fabulous nature shot that's a delight to view.

Provided you can get close to the subject and place the sun directly behind it, shots like these can be achieved with any camera and a standard zoom. On the technical side, you need to ensure that the leaf fully obscures the sun, and to err on the side of caution, use your camera's Live View mode, so you don't get dazzled by direct sunlight through the viewfinder. Getting the perfect exposure can be tricky with such dramatic backlighting, so shoot in RAW format. That way, you can fine tune your exposure when you're back at the computer.



To capture the beauty of nature in a simple shot, all you need is a sunny day and a little RAW processing.

Take care when composing, as you need the sun to be fully covered by the leaf.

Shoot leaves backlit by direct sunlight

Set up your camera

Set your exposure mode to Aperture priority (A or Av) and make sure the ISO setting is at its lowest value. Select your RAW format and frame up using Live View with the active AF point the leaf. Dial in an aperture of f/5.6 or f/8. The shutter speed will be very fast - we got a setting of 1/4000sec. If the shutter is out of range, choose a smaller aperture like f/11 or f/16.



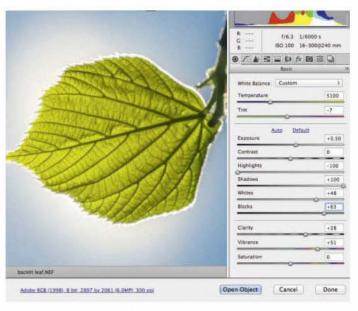
Take a brace of shots

Take several shots, all the time looking to get the halo as even as possible around the rim of the leaf. Check the results on screen, and make sure you can see some detail in both the leaf and the sky. If you need to make your shot darker, hold down the +/- button and dial in -1.0 of Exposure Compensation before reshooting. To make it brighter, dial in +1.0. Keep shooting until you have an evenly lit, well-exposed pic - it won't take you long.



Process the RAW

Adobe Camera Raw will launch when the shot is opened into Photoshop or Elements. Under the Basic tab. set Shadows to +100 to boost detail, and reduce Highlights to -100 to compress the bright sky. After that, adjust the Whites and Blacks to introduce the amount of contrast you want. Tweak Exposure to obtain a balanced pic, and to get more blue in the sky, move Temperature a little to the left. Finally, to increase definition, push up Clarity.



WHY THIS SHOT WORKS



Discover what makes **Abdul Khabir Mohamed Ali's** special effect-laden composite shot so powerful

WORDS BY ANDY HEATHER



A COMPOSITIONAL TRIANGLES

There's so many tiny particles flying around this shot, that it's easy to overlook the big picture. When broken down into its simplest elements, there are three main points of interest: the model, the burning book bottom left and the disintegrating book on the right. These three points create a triangle that keeps the viewer's eye moving around the shot in a continuous loop, and stops the attention from being sent out of the image.

B LOW ANGLE-OF-VIEW

By shooting from close to ground level, Abdul has given his subject a more heroic and imposing appearance. The more you position a camera below your subject's eye level, the more they will appear to dominate the frame – and the viewer. Doing the opposite, and composing from above eye-level, will make the subject submissive to the viewer.

JUSTIFY SPECIAL EFFECTS WITH A THEME
Executing Photoshop effects without a purpose or meaningful
reason can leave a viewer dissatisfied, but Abdul has introduced a
narrative that supports the central effect. Here, the disintegration of the
books by the model's superpower is related to the core theme,

GOD IS IN THE DETAILS

'Knowledge is Power'.

The success of the shot depends on the quality of this dominant special effect, which comes from the alluring heroine using her telekinetic superpowers to disintegrate books. With his outstanding post-processing skills, Abdul was able to depict levitating books bursting into a dazzling number of fragments. The result is a compelling image that makes the viewer want to examine every detail.

Camera Canon EOS 5D Mark III & 35mm lens

Exposure 1/160sec @ f/5.6, ISO 250

Software Photoshop

Visit 500px.com/AbdulKhabirMohamedAli



PHOTO INSIGHT





1 PATCH OF GRASS, 3 PHOTOGRAPHERS. WHAT WOULD YOU SHOOT?

Take our creative challenge today!

HEN TRAVELLING TO NEW locations our senses are alert to the world around us. Back home in familiar environments however, inspiration can be harder to find because we stop looking at the world with wonder.

To recapture that way of seeing things, some photographers take a conceptual route and create an image in their head before picking up the camera. Others wander out with their kit and wait for something to catch their eye. Whether you get your picture-making stimuli from internal or

external sources, one thing's for sure – being served up with a narrow and limited brief will always challenge your thinking and get your creative juices flowing.

There are often great shots to be had of subjects that wouldn't normally be considered photogenic – everyday items and scenes that you'd walk straight past while searching for more worthy subjects.

By limiting yourself to less obvious subjects, you'll work your creative and technical muscles much harder. Before long, you'll start to envisage shots that had never before entered your head. The good news is that if you can pull off a great shot from a subject you wouldn't normally consider, you'll train your eye to see picture opportunities at a much higher level.

We challenged the *Digital Photo* team to push their creativity with a tough brief centred on a single subject. They were allowed to use any camera or lens to get their shots, and with Photoshop being just as vital in crafting a good image as a camera, post-processing was both allowed and actively encouraged!



Discover how all these images were created





Jon backlights a daisy with flash to make it glow

I love a photo challenge, but looking down on a yard of grass wasn't lighting up my imagination. When a subject doesn't give me anything, I always try to approach it differently, so I grabbed a bin liner to protect my clothes and dropped down to ground level to look again.

With my nose in the turf, I had a very different perspective on the green blades. I was planning on making these my subject. The trouble was, the grass had been cut, so the blades were all torn off at mid-height. Suddenly I realised that when you're really close, a complete blade is actually far more elegant than a well-kept lawn!

I needed a change of tack, so I looked for a subject that would command the frame. Luckily, fast-growing daisies had already sprung up, so I fitted a 90mm macro lens and framed up on a flower head.

With the subject magnified, the zone of sharp focus was very narrow, and the AF kept whirring in and out. To keep control, I switched to Manual Focus.

The pic was lacking a certain freshness, so I grabbed a water spray and fired a fine mist over the daisy. This gave the look of a fresh, dew-dappled dawn, but the lighting was still rather flat. To perk things up, I positioned my flashgun behind the daisy and at an angle of about 45 degrees to the camera. This would backlight the flower head to make it glow and add a sparkle to the 'dew'.

I set up the camera to trigger the flashgun

remotely and took a few test shots. I checked the screen to see how well the lighting was working and altered the flash position until I had a good effect. After a few more test shots, I eventually settled on an aperture of f/16, as this retained plenty of definition, and gave me a darker background that made the daisy stand out.



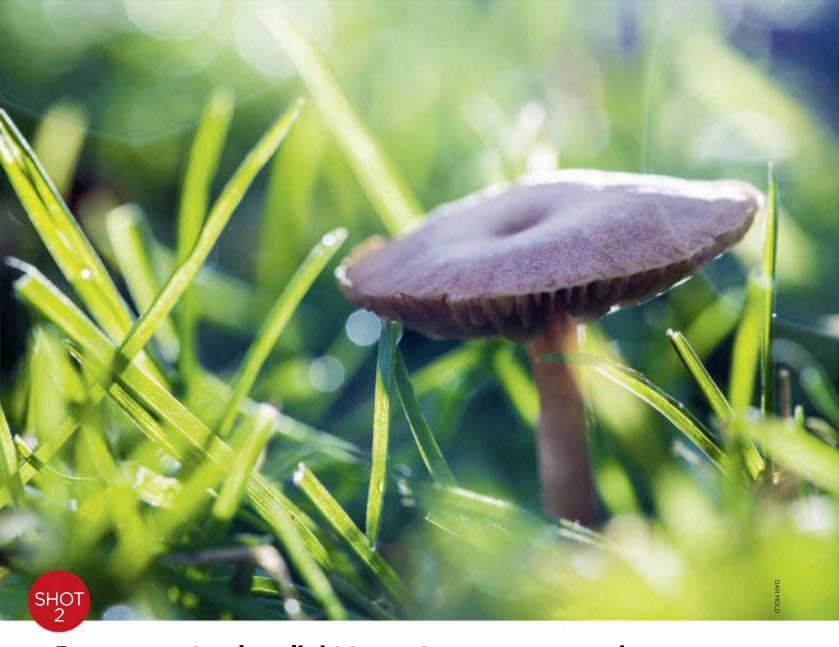
I picked my favourite shot and loaded it into Camera Raw. I adjusted sliders to get a punchy look, before opening it in Photoshop. I then opened the original into Camera Raw

again but this time decreased the Clarity
setting to get a blurry effect. I opened
this version into Photoshop, too, and
copied and pasted the sharp shot
over the diffused one, so they were
on separate Layers. I changed the

sharp Layer's Blending Mode to Lighten to merge the shots together. This enhanced the glow around the petals. Overall, I'd shot around 60 frames, and had spent a thoroughly absorbing hour getting my pic. Even better, I'd taken a shot I'd normally pass by and found inspiration in something I wouldn't normally give a second glance to. What a fantastic challenge!

Lessons learned

Although most of us like a neat lawn, I discovered that when you're shooting grass from really close, a complete blade is actually *more* picturesque. When it comes to aesthetically-pleasing subjects, there's no beating mother nature!



Dan uses natural sunlight to capture a macro mushroom

I started by walking up and down the lawn looking for a focal point that would really anchor my shot. I originally thought a small flower or insect would work well, but when I stumbled across this small mushroom I knew I'd found my point of interest.

I had a Tamron 60mm f/2 macro lens to hand, which is ideal for getting really close to a subject. It's all too easy to get a shallow depth-of-field when shooting macro, so although this lens has a maximum aperture of f/2, I closed it down to f/13 to get the detail in the mushroom sharp on its leading edge.

I moved into a position where the grass was backlit by the sun. When I found a spot, I dropped my camera to ground level and adjusted the vari-angle screen so I could compose without getting too muddy! Framing up with Live View is also the safest option when shooting towards the sun because looking through the optical viewfinder of a DSLR can damage your eyes. I knew

if I got a few blades of grass close to the front element of the lens it would turn into a nice green blur and add a diffused foreground to frame my subject.

Like most macro lenses, the Tamron 60mm has a maximum reproduction ratio of 1:1. This means your subject is captured at the same size as it would be if it were laid directly over the camera's sensor. I manually focused to its 1:1 setting and then moved the camera back and forth until the front edge was sharp. I also made sure that the mushroom sat a third of the way from the frame edge as this made for a more attractive composition.

I took a few shots and inspected the sharpness by zooming in on the rear of the LCD screen. Back at my computer I picked my favourite shot and removed a few distracting specks of dirt using the Spot Healing Brush in Photoshop.

I moved the camera back and forth until the front edge was sharp



The vari-angle screen helped Dan set up an awkward composition easily.

Lessons learned

I wanted to backlight my subject with the powerful morning sun, but the viewfinder was too close to the ground, plus the sun can damaged your eyes. Instead, I used my vari-angle screen with Live View. This made it really comfortable to frame up.



Andy fashions an outdoor studio with a piece of turf

I'm a fan of macro images featuring a natural subject with attractive, backlit bokeh orbs in the background. However, given the nature of this month's challenge, I had a feeling that would be most photographers' first impulse. To make my shot stand out, I decided to try

and play with scale by making my patch of grass a miniature movie set for a dramatic scene being played out by kids' toys.

As luck would have it, I'd been digging up squares of turf in my garden, which were starting to discolour. I thought one might make an interesting 'set', so I

placed it on a folding table. This meant I could shoot at a comfortable height and use a tripod.

In preparation for the shoot, I'd scoured my local supermarket and found a bag of toy soldiers. Each of the figures in the bag was a similar size, which made composition a little easier. I wanted the scene to appear hazy to add to the illusion of scale, so I used some

incense sticks to create smoke. The final component was a computer monitor. I placed this behind my turf set with a shot computer monitor of the night sky on it to use as a background. Because monitors are backlit, the stars appear a little brighter than they would if I'd just used a sheet of paper. I piled up the incense sticks to create a mini campfire and

> arranged the soldiers. I hid some more incense sticks around the set for extra smoke.

I switched my camera's Self-timer to 10secs and pressed the shutter button. The ambient light was diffused because it was a cloudy day, so I lit the scene with a bright LED torch. I held it behind the monitor as if it was a searchlight shining down into the miniature camp. The torch also backlit the smoke, which is a trick I've seen used to great effect when lighting movie sets. I knew I was going to transform the scene into a night shot and that the edge of the pic would be heavily vignetted, so I shone the torch into the centre and left the edges unlit.

The shot looked pretty good straight out the camera, but I decided to desaturate the colours using a Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer in Photoshop to add to the war movie vibe. I also added some flames to the campfire in Photoshop to give a strong focal point.





I placed a

with a shot of the

night sky behind

my turf 'set'



With a piece of discoloured turf on a folding table and a night sky pic on a monitor, Andy built a set for his grassy image.



Lessons learned

When I shot this without smoke. there was no sense of depth to the image and it still looked like a miniature. In reality, cloud and other airborne particles make distant objects look hazy. Smoke from Mosquito coils or incense sticks is a safe and cheap way to add a sense of depth to a miniature.



Send us yours!

Now you've seen what the *Digital Photo* team has produced, have a go yourself. Send us your creative shots & they could appear in the UK's best photo mag! Email your pics to: dpimages@ bauermedia.co.uk

CREATIV



Amos Chapple brings a fine-art aesthetic to his aerial shots, all of which are captured using a remote-piloted camera drone

WORDS BY MATTY GRAHAM

ANKIND'S FASCINATION WITH **FLIGHT** represents the endless yearning for new destinations and to gaze upon views from a different perspective. In days gone by, photographers wanting to capture aerial images needed big kit and deep pockets. Helicopters were hired by professionals for thousands of pounds per hour and this meant that the genre was mostly the preserve of advertising agencies or particularly wealthy shooters.

But technology has found a way to bring aerial photography to the masses. It comes in the form of radio controlled drones. One of the biggest and most controversial breakthroughs over the last decade, drone photography is the latest big thing and is, quite literally, taking off.

One of the leading pioneers of drone photography is New Zealand native, Amos Chapple. While anybody with around £700 can now purchase a drone, Amos is a true master of the craft, creating images that not only show landmarks in a new light, but add a fine-art feel to this remote-piloted passion.

"Straight out of school I went into freelancing with papers, before moving into photojournalism full time," he explains. "In 2006 Í was commissioned to photograph UNESCO World Heritage sites. I was sent around Europe and Asia on and off for around five years, which gave me a real taste for travel." Amos learned photography

thanks to his parents. His father, a writer, shot his own images for publication, while Amos' mother photographed every childhood occasion and created endless scrapbooks of images. But surprisingly, the biggest photojournalist influence Amos lists wasn't from his home country of New Zealand, but from Belgium -sort of...

"The cartoon character TinTin had a huge impact on me," recalls Amos.
"Maybe it was TinTin's globetrotting that inspired me to explore the world, but once you've spent some time travelling, it's hard to go back to a small, provincial country like New Zealand."

It wasn't long before Amos' passport started to fill up, but it was the search for new views and unexpected angles that led the talented photojournalist to drone photography. "All photographers look up at the birds and wonder what they're seeing," explains Amos. He indulged in some helicopter shoots a few times while working for his newspaper, but found them to be too restrictive.

Who is Amos?

Based in New Zealand, but constantly travelling, photojournalist Amos Chapple has seen his work represented by agencies including Rex and Getty. See more of his work at www.amoschapplephoto.com





"Because you're so high in a 'copter and usually using a long lens, you can't get close enough to shoot wide and really show the context of the subject. Drones fly higher than an industrial crane, but much lower than a helicopter".

Amos waited until the technology had not only arrived, but proven itself to be reliable in the field. Some early drones malfunctioned, causing terminal damage to equipment, but once he was satisfied his investment would last, Amos purchased a DJI Phantom drone. While swapping between cameras can force photographers to relearn certain skills, switching to a drone involved conquering a whole host of new challenges. "I had to see things in a completely different way," says Amos, who learned through his mistakes some more costly than others. Amos discovered that taking the drone up and close to structures, such as church towers, didn't make the most of the technology at his fingertips. Wider views of subjects, where the viewer can take a step back and explore the whole frame were more successful. More practically, Amos had to learn how to maintain his drone - an instrument every bit as precise as a DSLR. "One drone I owned had a propeller setup that worked against the nuts holding it in place, so they were constantly trying to unscrew themselves. I wasn't aware they needed tightening and, sure enough, one propeller failed when the drone was 100 metres in the air over St Petersburg in Russia, falling to the ground

Quickfire questions

What elements do you look for in a great drone image?

It's a tricky question, but the key element for me is having a lot in the frame to explore. That's the beauty of drone photography, it always good to have a whole universe of information behind the main focal point. I love being able to zoom in on the image, centimetre by centimetre and explore the view. The other element is about emotion, which is harder to achieve with a drone but is possible given the right light and weather conditions. Sometimes it's not in my hands – you're just given a scene and you have to take the opportunity and capture it at its best.

What advice would you give those looking to get started in drone photography?

Always bear in mind that you're representing a community of photographers. When you work,

be polite and respect the rules because those rules are justified. Be safe, don't be a nuisance and you'll pick up the rest along the way.

Are there any post-processing challenges unique to drone shots?

When the drone is used in windy conditions, it tips forward to maintain its position and this leads to more cropping in Photoshop to straighten horizons. Other than that, my other adjustments are simple tweaks using Curves and Levels to improve the general look of the image.

What other equipment do you need to fly your drone?

Apart from the drone, you'll need a smartphone or tablet. This displays a live feed of what the drone's camera can see. This also means that, should you want to, you can fly the drone even when it's out of your line of sight.

and breaking it completely." After that incident, Amos became a far more cautious drone photographer and accepts that any flight involves some stress. "I fly the drone like an airline pilot, getting it up into position and down as smoothly as possible."

Additional challenges present themselves to Amos in relation to battery life. Even the most trigger-happy photographer can get a good few hours from their DSLR battery, but the average operating time for a drone on a full charge is around 12 minutes. Amos carries two batteries and each flight lasts around

three minutes, giving eight to ten flights before he needs to find a recharging point. "It doesn't sound long, but I get around 100 shots per flight, so it's actually all I need to make sure I've got the right pictures."

The majority of his flights take place in the morning as conditions are more favourable. "The wind is usually still, there's far fewer people around and, if I'm lucky, there can be that lovely ground mist." Amos will recce the location the day before to get the lay of the land and then arrive early in the morning to set up. The first flight records test images that



- Amateur Photographer May 2014

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| 49mm | £17.00 | 67mm | £21.00 | 4 Grades: |
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| 38.1mm | 40.5-58 | 62mm | 52-77 | |
| 39mm | 49-52 | 67mm | 58-82 | |
| 40mm | 49 | 72mm | 86-105 | |
| 40.5mm | 37-58 | 77mm | 58-105 | |
| 43mm | 37-72 | 82mm | 72-105 | |
| 43.5mm | 46-58 | 86mm | 72-105 | |
| 46mm | 37-62 | 93mm | 82 | |
| 48mm | 46-58 | 95mm | 82-105 | |
| 49mm | 37-77 | 105mm | 86-95 | |
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Lens Adaptors

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| Canon EOS | to | Nikon | £22.95 | Micro 4/3 | to | Nikon G | £34.95 |
| Canon EOS | to | Nikon G* | £39.95 | Micro 4/3 | to | M42 | £29.95 |
| Canon EOS | to | Pentax K | £24.95 | Micro 4/3 | to | Olympus OM | £29.95 |
| Canon EOS | to | Olympus OM | £24.95 | Micro 4/3 | to | Minolta MD | £29.95 |
| Canon EOS | to | Con/Yash | £24.95 | Micro 4/3 | to | Leica R | £29.95 |
| Canon EOS | to | Leica R | £22.95 | Micro 4/3 | to | Leica M | £29.95 |
| Canon EOS | to | Leica M | £24.95 | Micro 4/3 | to | Sony Alpha | £34.95 |
| Canon EOS | to | Canon FD | £44.95 | Micro 4/3 | to | Pentax K | £29.95 |
| Canon EOS-M | to | Canon EOS | £29.95 | Micro 4/3 | to | Canon FD | £29.95 |
| Canon EOS-M | to | Leica M | £29.95 | Micro 4/3 | to | Con/Yash | £29.95 |
| Canon EOS-M | to | Nikon | £29.95 | 4/3 | to | M42 | £17.95 |
| Canon EOS-M | to | Canon FD | £29.95 | 4/3 | to | Con/Yash | £22.95 |
| Canon EOS-M | to | C Mount | £29.95 | 4/3 | to | Leica R | £22.95 |
| Canon EOS-M | to | M39 | £29.95 | 4/3 | to | Nikon | £22.95 |
| Canon EOS-M | to | M42 | £29.95 | 4/3 | to | Olympus OM | £22.95 |
| Fuji X | to | M42 | £24.95 | 4/3 | to | Pentax K | £22.95 |
| Fuji X | to | Leica M | £29.95 | Pentax | to | M42 | £18.95 |
| Fuji X | to | Nikon | £29.95 | Pentax | to | Nikon | £44.95 |
| Fuji X | to | Canon EOS | £29.95 | Pentax | to | Sony Alpha | £44.95 |
| Fuji X | to | Olympus OM | £29.95 | Pentax | to | Canon FD | £44.95 |
| Fuji X | to | 4/3 | £29.95 | Sony Alpha | to | M42 | £15.95 |
| Fuji X | to | Canon FD | £29.95 | Sony Alpha | to | Minolta MD | £44.95 |
| Fuji X | to | Con/Yash | £29.95 | Sony Alpha | to | Nikon | £44.95 |
| Nikon | to | M42 | £24.95 | Sony Alpha | to | Pentax K | £44.95 |
| Nikon | to | Canon FD | £44.95 | Sony Alpha | to | Canon FD | £44.95 |
| Nikon | to | C Mount | £32.95 | Sony NEX | to | Canon EOS | £29.95 |
| Nikon 1 | to | M42 | £24.95 | Sony NEX | to | Nikon | £29.95 |
| Nikon 1 | to | M39 | £22.95 | Sony NEX | to | Sony Alpha | £34.95 |
| Nikon 1 | to | Nikon | £29.95 | Sony NEX | to | Olympus OM | £29.95 |
| Nikon 1 | to | Canon EOS | £44.95 | Sony NEX | to | Pentax K | £29.95 |
| Nikon 1 | to | Pentax K | £29.95 | Sony NEX | to | Leica M | £29.95 |
| Nikon 1 | to | Leica M | £39.95 | Sony NEX | to | Leica R | £29.95 |
| Nikon 1 | to | Leica R | £37.95 | Sony NFX | to | Canon FD | £42 95 |

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INTERVIEW



Amos' drone offers viewers an often unseen aspect on the Taj Mahal. Many landmarks have now banned drone use, making Amos' job much harder.

instantly transfer to Amos' iPad, a useful feature that he calls 'a game changer'. Amos will then study the shots carefully and use the rest of his flight time to refine the images of the location.

The images Amos creates stand apart from the usual drone photography and he humbly

I was once chased out of the Taj Mahal by police while trying to capture some shots with the drone

explains how his pictures achieve their fine-art feel. "It's down to the lighting, and that is weather dependant. Being on location when that golden light appears is vital as that's what really makes the difference."

Amos' job is arguably harder than a stills photographer because of the negative press

drones have attracted and the ever-changing regulations governing their use in public. Amos is very conscious of how annoying a drone can be, and that the process of capturing images using one can be ugly. "I'm very shy about my drone use. I'm on location before sunrise so there's normally nobody around - I hate being in sight of people," explains Amos. "Once I was chased out of the Taj Mahal when attempting to capture some shots. I pity the terrorist who tries anything around that landmark because the police are very vigilant. They didn't want me to use the drone but I'd come all that way, so I managed to get the shots before I was eventually run out of town!"

Amos understands the public's resistance to drones and says he often sees people using the technology in an obnoxious manner. Flying drones over crowds is a strict no-no for Amos and he urges all photographers to take responsibility for their actions. "It can be painful to watch and

Listen to Amos on your CD

There's so much story behind every one of Amos' amazing images that we asked the expert himself to reveal some more detail about the pictures within this image.

We've created a special audio slideshow, which can be found on the CD. Listen to Amos talk about his portfolio, why the shots work and some interesting technical knowledge that puts you behind the scenes on one of his high-tech drone-cam photoshoots.



Watch the video on the CD now.



On top of the challenges of lighting and wind, Amos had to convince a security guard to let him capture this mosque in India.



there should be an etiquette. I confronted a fellow drone flyer recently who was using a big DJI Inspire model near to a car track – it was both dangerous and obnoxious." The increasing regulations surrounding drone use could seriously impede his art, but Amos is actually in complete agreement with them. After all, they're drawn up to counter the behaviour of photographers less conscientious than himself.

With regulations tightening up, Amos states his mission is to photograph the remaining landmarks that are yet to succumb to the more restrictive drone laws. "I expect the rules and regs to get even tighter, but photography is forever. The landmarks I have captured won't be changing over the next 100 years, so my images are timeless and having this archive is precious."

Amos plans to continue his travels and explore areas with a more relaxed approach to drone photography, such as Armenia, Georgia and Uzbekistan – places Amos rightly points out with bigger problems than implementing drone regulations.

Because he uses new technology to create his art, it's fitting that the bulk of exposure about Amos' work is coming via new media. "I have regular clients that buy my images, but the best exposure arrived when I uploaded my images to Reddit," explains Amos. "Sometimes images will trail off, but other times they will really capture people's attention. My drone gallery made it on to the front page of Reddit, which is the most visited page on the internet."

Amos has worked with big agencies, such as Rex, but is amazed by the depth and reach of the internet and how it can benefit a



photographer's profile if it goes viral. "You're waking up to 35 emails every morning and just for a moment you feel like you're on top of the mountain!"

With an ever-expanding portfolio but a limited time window to add to his work, Amos is continuing his travels, with trips to France and India lined up. There is one country on his list however, that Amos would love to tick. "If I could choose any destination, it would be Iran. I love it as a country and would love to show it off to the

world as it has some amazing cultural sites," he explains. "The landscapes are dry, the light is golden and the people are fantastic. But at the moment, it would just be too dangerous to try and capture drone images there. Getting permission is a long and tortuous process, and the government doesn't work in a normal way. I managed to get a direct line to the tourism minister, but so far, I've yet to make it happen. Maybe that will change in the future, as capturing drone shots in Iran would be the ultimate."

The gear Amos uses for his eye in the sky



The secret to and the source of Amos' aerial photography is his drone. It's operated by radio control, much in the same way as a model plane, but as the system works off GPS, the drone proves to be far more stable and easier to fly. Amos can connect to the drone's built-in camera via its Wi-Fi signal, which he can then sync with his smartphone. The phone screen displays what the camera is seeing, and Amos can touch the screen to zoom in or out, pan left or right, start recording video footage or take a stills shot.

One of the biggest names in drone photography is DJI. The brand offers a range of models with the most affordable units starting at around £400.

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PHOTO



Photoshop GENUS Create SPECIAL EFFECTS



Get friends abducted by UFOs! p72



Discover the skills today's photographers need!

Merge natural elements together p86



Get a retro look from RAW p88



Get a wider view from a kit lens p76



Create beautiful nature pics p78



Make a digital double exposure p84



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Photoshop Genius **GETTING STARTED**

CREATE SPECIAL EFFECTS

LTHOUGH MANY SPECIAL effects can be created in camera, imageediting software adds an entirely new dimension to your photography. The editing work is computer based, but reinventing your shots in software is just as exciting as taking them. In Photoshop Genius, you'll learn the techniques you need to develop your imaging skills at a rapid pace. With regard to software, Adobe Photoshop is the best-known example, though there are different versions of it, and many other packages on the market from various software makers. A digital picture consists of a mosaic of tiny squares called pixels – a term

derived from *picture elements*. A 24-megapixel image from a typical D-SLR will feature 24 million of them, and each one has its own colour and brightness value.

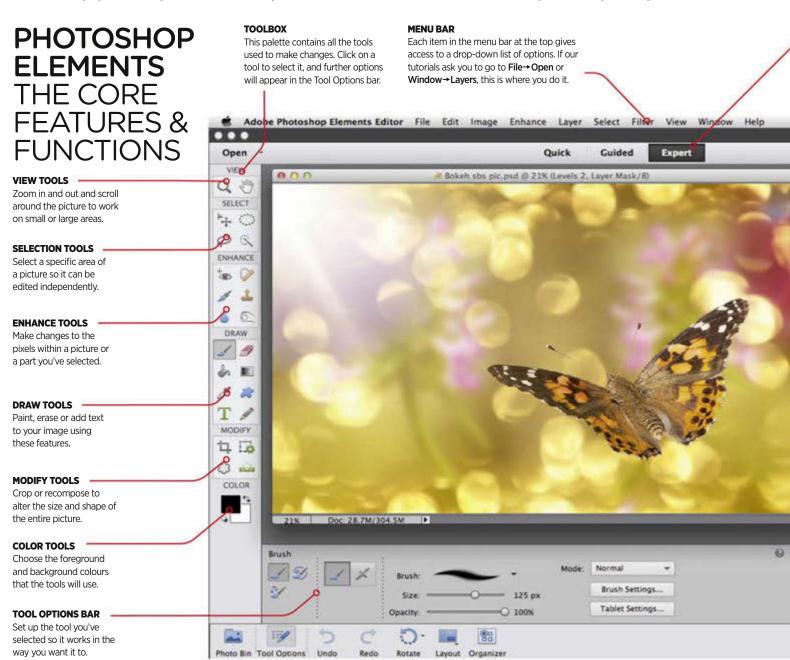
Getting a new look

By adjusting these values in editing software, you manipulate the picture, changing the way it appears. And when it comes to creating special effects, you can use a variety of methods to adjust the brightness and colour of the pixels you select, and you can change the way they look using processing effects called Filters. To build up an image, Layers are used. These allow different areas

to be isolated and edited separately, and also allow you to introduce different elements into the mix such as parts borrowed from other pictures. Don't worry if you're new to Layers – follow our tutorials, watch the videos, and try the techniques, and you'll be an expert in no time!

The Digital Photo method

In *Digital Photo*, the most authoritative guide to imaging, we break down essential imaging techniques into easy step-by-steps. Using the most popular software, our inspiring projects are backed up by videos that bring the technique to life on your computer screen.





IN PHOTOSHOP

Learn with Photo

1 Watch the video lesson

Load the disc, click on the video you want to watch, and our experts will walk you through.



2 Follow the steps

Open the start images into your software and follow the tutorial in the magazine.



Create "

Opacity: 100% of

#Q-#

3 Produce a pro image

Complete the project then use the technique you've learnt to enhance your own shots



EXPERT MODE

Click on this to enter the most feature-rich display mode for all projects.

Layer 4 copy

Layers Effects Graphics Favorites

LAYERS PALETTE

One of the most important palettes for creative imaging work, this is a core feature of Elements and Photoshop.

CREATE A NEW LAYER

Click to make a blank Laver.

NEW ADJUSTMENT LAYER

Click to bring up a list of Adjustment Layer options, and choose the one you want.

Get rid of unwanted Layers by dragging and dropping them on this icon.

LAYER OPACITY

A slider lets you fade a Layer between 0% (transparent) and 100% (fully opaque) to control how it appears.

BLENDING MODES

A drop-down list lets you select from a large number of choices to affect how the Layer interacts with the Layer below.

LAYER MASK

Hides or reveals part of the Layer to which it's attached.

LAYER NAME

Double-click here to give the Layer a new name.

LAYER THUMRNAIL

A small scale image to help you identify the Layer's contents.

SHOW/HIDE LAYER

Switch Layers on and off so you can see their effect

PANEL OPTIONS

Lavers is the default, though you can display other options, or customise your workspace under the More icon.

Image editing software options



PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 13 £60

Photoshop Elements is the stripped-down version of Photoshop targeted at enthusiasts. It offers the core features that photographers need and sports a similar interface to the professional Photoshop CC. Along with Layers, Layer Masks and a host of Selection tools, Elements offers a basic but effective version of Adobe Camera Raw for editing and enhancing RAW files.



PHOTOSHOP CC

£8.57 MONTHLY

Photoshop CC (Creative Cloud) is the professional version of Photoshop. It's only available as a subscription, so you pay £8.57 monthly to use it. The deal includes Lightroom 6 so there's no need to buy this separately. As well as the tools in Elements, Photoshop offers Curves, the Pen tool, and Color Balance. It also features an advanced RAW converter, which shares the same RAW engine as Lightroom 6.



LIGHTROOM 6 £104

Photoshop Lightroom is a RAW workflow package offering a pro-level RAW converter and image management features for cataloguing your shots. It shares the same RAW conversion functions as Photoshop CC, but has a different interface. Lightroom doesn't feature Layers for creating shots with multiple images, but many photographers who don't want to subscribe to Photoshop CC find a combination of the standalone Lightroom and Flements meets their needs

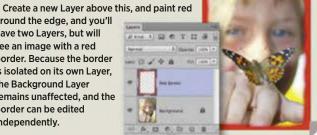
For more info on the above packages, visit www.adobe.com/uk

Getting to grips with Layers

One of the most challenging aspects of image-editing for those new to Photoshop is the subject of Layers. There's no parallel in traditional photography, but with a little practice, it doesn't take long to get a firm grasp of what they do. In essence, Layers are separate parts of an image, which stack on top each other to build up the

complete picture. Open a pic you've taken, and it'll have a single Background Layer.

around the edge, and you'll have two Layers, but will see an image with a red border. Because the border is isolated on its own Layer, the Background Layer remains unaffected, and the border can be edited independently.



Photoshop Genius special effects

TURN FRIENDS INTO **UFO ABDUCTEES!**



We all love an out-of-this world Photoshop experience! Read on to find out how to create one yourself using shots of your own friends and family

LMOST EVERYWHERE YOU

LOOK today, be it billboards,

Facebook timeline, you're constantly

you that that's no longer the case!

confronted by images of the impossible

product packaging or even your

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY ANDY HEATHER

At a glance

YOU'LL LEARN How to cut out a person, create a tractor beam and relight a portrait using brushes YOU'LL NEED Photoshop or

TIME REQUIRED 15 minutes **DIFFICULTY LEVEL** Medium



VIDEO LESSONS Watch as Andy walks you through this project on your computer screen. START IMAGES The UFO is baked into Background.jpg, which is in the Start Images folder. You'll also find Sky.jpg for the tractor beam and Model.jpg for the subject.

being brought to life in Photoshop. Until recently the tools and techniques that make these fantastical images possible have seemed out of reach to us mere mortals. However, we're here to tell

> With computer power increasing all the time and ever-more-affordable Photoshop subscription packages available, anyone can get into creating breathtaking photographic special effects with just a little bit of Digital Photo knowhow. In this technique, we're going to show you how

to create this alien abduction image in just eight steps. It's a composite image, so we'll be walking you through how to make a careful selection around a friend or relative and then cut them out.

This technique is going to involve using a combination of the Quick Selection tool, the Polygonal Lasso tool and the Refine Edge command to get the most realistic cutout possible. That's not all, however. Without the right lighting, your images simply won't match, so we'll be showing you how to relight your model in a way that will make her sit naturally in the scene. We'll even show you how to create a tractor beam out of a simple photo of some clouds - no painting or complicated filters required!



Our model Emily was shot from above lying on a sheet of white paper to make her easier to cut out later. We laid her hair out straight and had her pose as though she was being levitated by a UFO's tractor beam, which was created from a simple shot of a sunny sky.



The background shot was created from a photo of a field. another of a sunny sky and a third of a camera lens. We applied a 'day-for-night' transformation to the field and sky, then warped the lens until we had something resembling a UFO. By leaving the 'Canon EF Lens' text visible, the image takes on a double meaning - the model is literally and figuratively being captured by the lens! Ever economical, we used the same sky image again to create the UFO's tractor beam, so the same sky actually appears twice in the finished image!





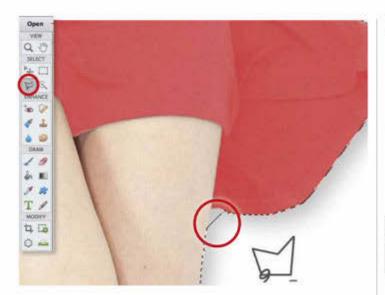
Open the background pic and reshape the sky into a tractor beam shape

In Photoshop or Elements, go to File→Open, navigate to the Start Images folder and double-click on Background.jpg. Next, go to File→Place. In the Start Images folder, double-click on Sky.jpg. When it's open, hit Enter to confirm and you'll see a new Layer appear in the Layers palette called Sky. Still in the Layers palette, click where it says Normal and change the Blending Mode to Screen. To create the tractor beam shape, go to Image→Transform→Distort (Edit→Transform→Distort in Photoshop). Drag the top corner handles up so they converge at the top. Drag the bottom corners down below the bottom of the image and spread them apart. The more you stretch the image, the more the clouds will look like streaks of alien energy emanating from the portal in the craft. Hit Return to confirm.



Blend the beam and add contrast

To blend in the tractor beam, click the Add layer mask icon at the top of the Layers palette. Select the Gradient tool (G) and press D to set your foreground and background colours to their default values of white and black, respectively. Now hit X to swap them. In the Tool Options bar, make sure Linear Gradient is selected and that Reverse is unticked. With the Mask selected, drag from the bottom of the image to the top. The black to white gradient will create the impression that the light is fading out. Next, with a large, soft, black brush, soften the edges of the beam by painting along the edges. Finally, go to Enhance→Adjust Lighting→Levels or hit Ctrl+L. Elements will ask you if you want to simplify the Layer - click OK to this. Levels palette, move the Shadows slider to 50 and the Highlights slider to 225. Set the Midtones slider to 1.30.



Place and cut out your model

Next it's time to place our unfortunate alien abductee into the scene. To do that, go up to File→Place and double-click on Model.jpg or select one of your own shots. To cut her out, activate the Quick Selection tool (A) and drag your mouse over the entire figure. Tidy up the Selection by activating the Polygonal Lasso tool (press L repeatedly until the tool's icon appears). Hold down Shift and click around areas you want to add to the Selection. To do this, position the cursor where you want the shape to start and click once. Continue clicking around the edge, and when you return to the starting point, click once to complete the Selection. Hold Alt as you do this to subtract areas from the Selection. The hair Selection will be refined in the next step, so a rough Selection will be fine for now.



Refine the hair and contract the Selection to eliminate white edges

Click on Refine Edge in the Tool Options bar. In the dialogue box, make sure the Refine Radius tool is selected (E) and paint over the edges of the hair. Photoshop will automatically try to separate individual hairs from the background. Make sure that Output To is set to Selection and click OK. Sometimes, if you examine a cutout at 100% you may notice white outlines around objects. To prevent these, go to Select Modify Contract. In the dialogue box, set Contract By to 2 pixels and click OK. You'll see the marching ants around your figure shift inwards slightly. Click on the Create layer mask icon again to hide the white background and isolate your figure. Congratulations, you've just made a cutout!





Resize and relight the model

Hit Ctrl+T to enter Free Transform mode. In the Tool Options bar in Elements, make sure Constrain Proportions is ticked. In Photoshop, you can hold down Shift. Pull a corner handle to scale the figure to the size you want, and drag inside the bounding box to reposition. When you're done, take a look at the image as a whole. She still doesn't fit into the shot because she's far too bright. The key to a good composition is making sure the lighting of each element matches. You'll need to relight her so it looks like the shot was taken in the evening. To do this, go to Enhance→Adjust Lighting→Levels (or hit Ctrl+L). When Elements asks you if you want to simplify the Layer, click OK. In the Levels palette, drag the Midtones slider to 0.45.



Boost the contrast and darken again

It's now time to add some contrast and further darken the model. With the model's Layer still selected, hit Ctrl+J to duplicate it. Now hold down the Alt key and click on the space between the duplicate Layer and the model's Layer. This will create a Clipping Mask so the effects of the duplicate Layer (and the subsequent Layers you're going to create) apply only to the figure. You'll know you've been sucessful if a small, downward-pointing arrow appears to the left of the Layer thumbnail. Set the Blending Mode of the duplicate Layer to Soft Light. Hit Ctrl+J again and in the Layers palette, Alt-click in the space as before to create another Clipping Mask. Set the Blending Mode of the new Layer to Multiply to darken the figure. However, we only want her bottom half to be dark, so use the Eraser tool with a large, soft brush to delete the top half of the Layer.



Reduce Saturation and shift the Hue
With the midtones darkened, the figure is starting to look a
little more like she was shot in the evening. However, the
colours in the skin and dress are too saturated and don't
match the rest of the image. To fix this, go back up to Enhance and this
time go to Adjust Color-Adjust Hue/Saturation, or hit the shortcut
Ctrl+U. In the Hue/Saturation palette, reduce Saturation to -40. This will
bring the intensity of the colour in the Layer in line with the rest of the
image. It's still a little warm, though, and evening light tends to be quite
blue, so set the Hue slider to -15 to cool down the red tones slightly.



Create highlights and shadows

The final step is to create some highlights and shadows. Click once on the Create a new layer icon and again Alt-click on the space between the Layers to clip it. Select the Brush tool (B) and choose a soft-edged, white brush. Paint white into areas of the model that are facing the light. Once you've done this, blur those highlights by going to Filter→Blur→Gaussian Blur and use a Radius of 40px. Now change the Layer's Blending Mode to Overlay and reduce Opacity to 55%. Create another new Layer (Ctrl+Shift+Alt+N) and Alt-click in the space to clip it. This time paint black on any surface that's facing away from the light. Blur the shadows with the same Gaussian Blur settings, then change the Blending Mode to Overlay and set the Layer's Opacity to 55%. Go to File→Save As and give your shot a new name. Select JPEG for normal use, but if you want to edit the Layers in the future, use Photoshop (PSD).

CREATE A DIGITAL FISHEYE EFFECT

At a glance

YOU'LL LEARN How to create a dramatic fisheye lens effect from a regular wide-angle pic YOU'LL NEED Photoshop CS5, CS6 or CC

TIME REQUIRED 10 minutes
DIFFICULTY LEVEL Easy



On the disc

VIDEO LESSONS Watch as Jon runs through this great technique in real time on your computer screen.

START IMAGES The image Jon used to complete this project is in the Start Images folder.



Give a wide-angle shot an extreme look with a fisheye treatment in Photoshop

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY JON ADAMS

W

IDE-ANGLE LENSES ARE much loved by landscape and architecture photographers, as they make foregrounds easy to include and can pack a big view into the viewfinder.

Wide-angle focal lengths start at a conservative 35mm but get wider and wider until you reach 'ultra' wide-angles of 10mm. Most lenses of this type are optically corrected to control the bowing at the edges, but some types are uncorrected and exaggerate horizontal and vertical lines into an extreme form of barrel distortion. These 'fisheye' lenses give a really creative effect with the right angle and subject. Some variants cover the whole frame with the distortion increasing towards the edges, and others give such a wide view that they crop off the sensor with the edge of the lens. The extreme, circular effect that results used to be very difficult to reproduce in Photoshop, but users of the full version (CS5 or later) can create it thanks to the features of the impressive Warp tool. Sadly, this pixel-bending beast isn't included in Elements, but it's still well worth watching the video on the CD to discover how it can be used.



This contre-jour shot of the Digital Orca sculpture in Vancouver was captured using a 10mm lens, an aperture of f/7.1, a shutter speed of 1/350sec at ISO 100. I took the shot from the rear to see the city from the whale's perspective, making it the perfect view for a fisheye effect!



Open the pic & create the boundary

Open a picture you've taken with a wide-angle lens in Photoshop CS5 (or later), or use Fisheye.jpg from the Start Images folder. Once it's on screen, open the Layers palette (Window→Layers) and click on the Create a new Layer icon. Hit D to reset the colours to black and white, then select the Elliptical Marquee tool. Hit Ctrl+minus to zoom back and create some room, then hold Shift and drag out a big circular Selection. Keep the mouse and Shift held down, and you can move it into position by holding the Spacebar and dragging. Once it's positioned over the frame as above, release the mouse, then the other keys to keep it in place. Now hit Ctrl+Shift+I to get the inverse of the Selection, and Alt+Backspace to fill it with black. This will create your fisheye boundary. Hit Ctrl+D to lose the marching ants.



Create the fisheye effect

Click on the Background Layer to highlight it and make it active. Hit Ctrl+J to copy the Layer, then go to Edit→Free Transform. Pull the handles on either side of the bounding box inwards to 'squash' the pic and meet the edges of the circular boundary you've set up. Hit Return to confirm the changes, then go to Edit→Transform→Warp. In the Tool Options bar, click on Custom and select Fisheye from the drop-down list. You'll see the Rule of Thirds grid in the Warp tool's interface bend the picture into shape. You can drag the handles on the upper and lower thirds grid lines to adjust the effect, or you can key in the settings in the Tool Options bar. On the example image, Bend was set to 50, H (horizontal) to 0.0, and V (vertical) to 8.3. Hit Return to confirm the changes.







Refine the distortion in the image

Make another copy Layer with Ctrl+J and then go to Edit→
Transform→Warp once again. You won't need to run the
Fisheye option again unless you want a really extreme effect,
but you can use the regular Warp interface to further adjust the
distortion in the image. Do this using the handles on the vertical thirds
lines. You can't move them both outwards at the same time, so you'll
have to do it bit by bit, pulling one, then the other, until you've got the
effect you want. Once the bowing effect at the edges complements
your boundary, hit Return to make the changes.

Switch off the middle picture Layer by clicking the 'eye' icon alongside, then switch the top picture Layer off and on to see the difference you've made. To finish off, go to Layer-Flatten Image then save your pic under a new name via File-Save As.

Expert advice Do it in Elements

Although the Warp tool isn't offered in Elements, you can still create a good fisheye effect using the controls in the Correct Camera Distortion filter. To do this, follow Step 1 as for Photoshop, then select the Background Layer and hit Ctrl+J to copy it. Next go to Filter-Correct Camera Distortion. In the dialogue box, set the Scale slider at the bottom to 85%, then move the Remove Distortion slider to a value of -50.00. Click OK, and when the changes have processed, hit Ctrl+J to make a copy of the distorted Layer. Go to Filter-Correct Camera Distortion... a second time (be sure to pick the option with the three dots after it) and this time, set the Remove Distortion slider to -10.00. The result isn't quite as refined as Photoshop's Warp tool, but it's still effective.



CONJURE UP A SUMMER MOOD IN A FANTASY PIC



Blend different picture elements together to create an evocative, sun-drenched seasonal image

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY JON ADAMS

ITH THE RIGHT SUBJECT holding the viewer's attention at the heart of a scene, you only need a hint of context in the background for the whole image to work successfully. Dreamlike, fantasy scenes are hugely popular - especially when they incorporate real, natural subjects - and creating them is wonderfully rewarding. The process give lots of artistic licence to merge and blend different pics together to create atmospheric effects. With this image, I wanted to give a unique view of a butterfly, as though we are following it on its journey. With the right angle captured of the subject, the rest of the scene can be a delicate mixture of shapes and colours drawn from other shots to give a sense of emotion, season and place.



YOU'LL LEARN How to create a diffused background by blending different images together and add a nature subject as the focal point YOU'LL NEED Photoshop or

TIME REQUIRED 20 minutes **DIFFICULTY LEVEL** Medium

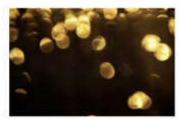


On the disc

VIDEO LESSONS Watch as Jon runs through this highly creative technique on your computer screen.

START IMAGES The pics Jon used are in the Start Images folder. They're called *Bokeh*, *Painted Lady*, *Flower* and *Lens Flare*.









The butterfly was taken perched on a hand, but we've cut it out for you. The Bokeh and Flower images create the background, and the lens flare adds sunshine!















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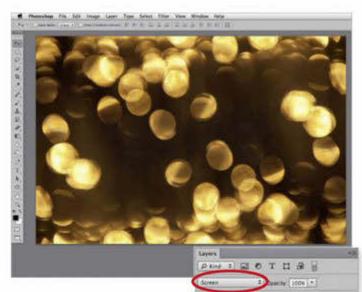






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Open and combine the bokeh effect

Open *Bokeh.jpg* into Photoshop or Elements from the Start Images folder. When it's on screen, hit **Ctrl+J** to duplicate it. Open the

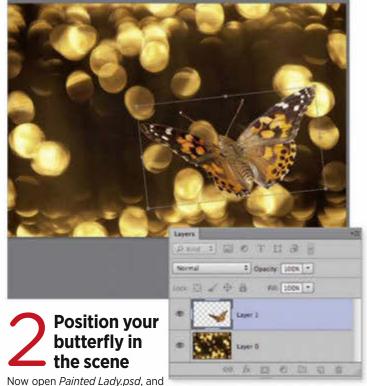
Layers palette (Window→Layers) and you'll see the copy floating above the Background Layer. In Photoshop, go to Edit→
Transform→Rotate 180° to flip it upside down. In Elements, you can do the same with Image→Rotate→Rotate Layer 180°. When you've done this, click where it says Normal and set the Blending Mode to Lighten. Now collapse the two Layers into one by hitting Ctrl+E. Hold Alt and double-click on the Background Layer's name to make it into Layer 0, then change the Blending Mode to Screen.

#M 100% *

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the same Ctrl+A, Ctrl+C, Ctrl+W and Ctrl+V sequence to paste it into the main image. In the Layers palette, drag the flower down to the very bottom of the Layers stack. Hit Ctrl+T and create some room around the canvas by hitting Ctrl+Minus a few times. Now drag the corner handles outwards to increase the size of the flower in the frame. In the example image, a size of 150% was used – you can see this in the Tool Options bar. Drag the flower over to the left of the frame, so it looks as though the butterfly is flying towards it. Don't worry about the hard edge that's left – just hit Return to confirm the changes.



when it's on screen, hit Ctrl+A to select it, followed by Ctrl+C to copy it. Close the file down with Ctrl+W and, with the main image back on screen, hit Ctrl+V to paste it in. Now hit Ctrl+T to go into Free Transform mode, and drag the butterfly to the right side of the image, about one-third of the way in. Hold the mouse outside the bounding box surrounding the butterfly, and drag upwards to rotate it a few degrees in an anti-clockwise direction. Hit Return to confirm.



Position & blur the flowers

With the flower Layer still active, select the Move tool, then hold Alt and drag the flower to the right. It will be copied. Go to Edit→Transform→Flip Horizontal to laterally reverse it (Image→Rotate→Flip Layer Horizontal in Elements). Move it to the right of the frame, behind the butterfly. Now select the Eraser tool and use a large, soft edged brush to rub out the 'join' between the flowers. Go to Filter→Blur→Gaussian Blur and use a Radius of 36px to blur the flower. Click OK, then select the other flower Layer, and use Gaussian Blur on this with a smaller Radius of 26px. Hit Ctrl+T, and increase the size of this flower to make it appear closer to the butterfly. An enlargement of 120% was used on the example pic.



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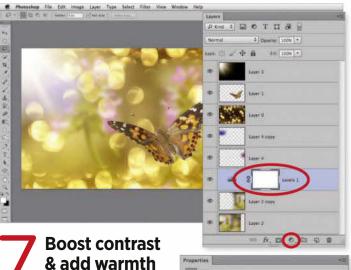
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image using the same Ctrl+A, Ctrl+C, Ctrl+W, Ctrl+V sequence as for the other pics. Hit Ctrl+T and drag the control handles outwards to make it fill the frame. Hit **Return** to confirm the changes. Your lens flare will obscure the entire image, but it can be adapted to show only the brighter pixels and make the dark background see-through. To do this, in the Layers palette, change the Lens Flare Layer's Blending Mode to **Screen** to make it shine through the other Layers.

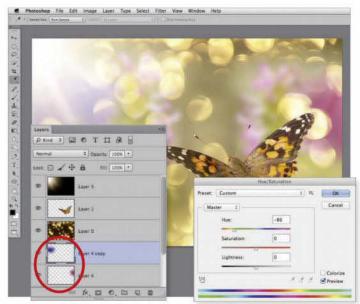


Levels

With all the components in place, it's time to add a little refinement to give the scene a slick finish. In the Layers palette, click on the top flower Layer and then click the Adjustment Laver icon. choosing Levels from the list. Move

the **Shadows** and **Midtones** sliders to 17 and 0.85 to enrich the contrast

in the background. Before quitting the palette, click where it says RGB and select Red. Move the Midtones slider to the left (around 1.20), then select Blue and move it to the right (around 0.80). This will give a warm, golden-coloured wash to the scene.



Add diffused blobs of colour Select the uppermost of the flower Layers and with the Lasso tool, select a green area under the flower, large enough to cover the 'hotspot' on the right. Click Refine Edge and set the Feather to 150px, then click OK. Hit Ctrl+J to punch this blob into a new Layer, and with the Move tool, drag it to cover the hotspot. Hit Ctrl+U and move the Hue slider to add a splash of blurred colour. A setting of -87 was used to echo the flowers, but pick any colour you like, then click **OK**. Now hold **Alt** and drag to copy this purple patch, and move it to cover the hotspot on the left near the lens flare. Recolour it in the same way (a setting of -86 was used to turn it blue). If any hard edges show on your colour blobs, select the appropriate Layer and clean them up with a soft-edged Eraser.



Add a vignette & soften the bokeh Click on the butterfly Layer, and with the Lasso tool make a rough Selection around the perimeter of the image, so there's a ragged margin around it. Click the Refine Edge button and move the Feather slider to 250px. Hit Ctrl+Shift+I to get the inverse of



Layer icon, selecting Levels from the list. Move the Shadows and Midtones slider to the right to darken the edge of the frame. Finally, select the bokeh Layer, and apply around 8px of Gaussian Blur to soften its edges and complete your fantasy image.

BLEND IMAGES FOR THEMED PORTRAITS

At a glance

YOU'LL LEARN How to blend differnt shots to create an artistic, stylised portrait

YOU'LL NEED Photoshop or Elements

TIME REQUIRED 10 minutes
DIFFICULTY LEVEL Easy



On the disc

VIDEO LESSONS Watch as Gavin runs through this impressive technique on your computer screen.

START IMAGES The images Gavin used to complete this project are in the Start Images folder.



Create arty people pics by merging shots together

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY GAVIN HOEY

OMBINING PHOTOS TO CREATE special effects may be seen as a technique that arrived with Photoshop, but its roots can be traced back to the earliest days of photography. There were two main ways to approach the task. The first was to take a photo and then capture a different image onto the same frame of film. The second way would involve sandwiching two photos together and printing or projecting the result. This second method took out some of the guesswork involved in the first, and it most closely resembles our digital double exposure technique.

While the results are a lot more controllable, there's still plenty of unpredictability in the process and that's part of its charm. The good news is you'll see your results instantly and with a few simple editing tricks you can seamlessly blend the images and create something unique and original. For this project we're using a portrait and some flowers, but you can use any pictures to create your own images.

For the effect to work well though, the secret is to have both subjects on a white background. You can shoot them this way or make a Selection in Photoshop, and fill it with white.





The start images were already cut out and placed on a white background to make the combination easy and quick to achieve.



Combine two images into one

Open the image you want to use, or try Double-Exposure-Flowers.jpg from the Start Images folder. Hit Ctrl+A followed by Ctrl+C to copy the flowers, then close the image. Now open Double-Exposure-Portrait.jpg and then press Ctrl+V to paste the flowers on top of the portrait. To blend the two pics together, open the Layers palette (Window→Layers) change the Blending Mode from Normal to Screen. The initial effect is good, but by pressing Ctrl+T and dragging your cursor outside the bounding box, you can rotate the flowers by 180° and move them until they blend with the face a little better. Hit Return to set down the changes. If there's anything around the edges you don't want paint over them with the Brush tool using a white foreground colour.



Blend the face with the flowers

To control how the face appears through the flowers, go to Layer Layer Mask Reveal All, then press D followed by X to set your foreground colour to black. In the Tool Options bar, reduce the Brush Opacity to 30% and then start painting across the face to slowly hide the flowers, revealing the portrait and blending the two together. Some of the leaves are missing from the back of the head, so to bring them back first click on the portrait Layer to make it active. Next go to Layer New Layer and click OK. Press D on the keyboard and paint on the areas where the leaves are missing to reveal them. Once you've done this, press X to swap to a white brush and paint around areas such as the top of the head to further help with the blending process.







Boost contrast & add a background

The end result may lack a little contrast so to improve it, click the flower Layer to make it active, then click Layer→New Adjustment Layer→Levels and then OK. Working from left to right, set the three slider values to 30, 1.25 and 235. To add a complementary background, go to Layer→New→Layer and click OK. Next, press D and then X to set the foreground colour to white and then click on the black background colour swatch. Use the Color Picker to select a colour directly from the image, and then select the Gradient Tool. Using the Foreground to Background gradient and the Radial type in the Tool Options bar, click in the centre of the image and drag to the edge. Blend this graduated background into the image by changing its Blending Mode from Normal to Multiply.

Bonus video Create a different style

This tutorial shows one of many ways in which you can create a multiple exposure effect. In the *Technique of the Month Extra* video you'll discover that slightly altering one or two steps in the process will produce very different results. In this case, the flowers will have a monochromatic look, and will combine with a portrait with subtle, muted colours.

You can catch the bonus video, which is completely free to watch on our website. All you have to do is sign up to our *Technique of the Month Extra* mailing list online at *www.photoanswers.co.uk/extra*. Register now, and you'll get a fantastic free video to boost your skills every single month, so you'll never be short of exciting new digital techniques to try.



See how to create a textured mono effect by watching the free bonus video on our website at www.photoanswers.co.uk/extra

MAKE A SURREAL ANIMAL PORTRAIT



Combine natural elements from different shots to create a new breed and produce an imaginative, eye-catching image

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY DAN MOLD

At a glance

YOU'LL LEARN How to combine and blend pictures together to create surreal animal portraits YOU'LL NEED Photoshop or Elements

TIME REQUIRED 10 minutes
DIFFICULTY LEVEL Easy



VIDEO LESSONS Watch as Dan walks you through this exciting imaging technique on your computer screen.

START IMAGES Dan used *Stag.jpg* and *Tree.png* to create this artistic image – you'll find them both in the Start Images folder.

ANTASY IMAGES ARE AN ABSOLUTE must for those looking to push their Photoshop skills. Fuelled by your imagination, they give you the chance to create an entirely unique style of picture that fuses different elements together to create something fresh and new. Part photo and part fine-art, they walk a line between the real and the surreal, and confront the viewer in an area of photography that has no established rules to refer to.

Splicing parts of different pictures together always presents a technical challenge to the image-maker, and tackling this technique will arm you with a great selection of important Photoshop skills. You'll discover how to bring your source pictures into the same document, how to resize the components to create a good match, and then how to use Layers and Layer Masks to blend them together seamlessly into a new image.

On top of that, you'll learn how to remove existing areas that are no longer required with the Clone Stamp tool, and how to add extra atmosphere by creating digital smoke and mist effects. To finish the project, you'll even learn how to create a blue-toned mono finish, adding a timeless quality to your surrealist scene. All told, this project is like an entire Photoshop course in miniature, and with a little practice, you can do it all in around 10 minutes!





Shot in the early morning through a blanket of mist, the *Stag.jpg* image was captured on a 150-600mm zoom lens. The tree was taken on a separate shoot, and is supplied as a cutout to make the Photoshop work easy.



Open your pics and resize the tree

In Photoshop or Elements, go to File→Open and double-click on Stag.jpg in the Start Images folder. When it's on screen, go to File→Open once more and open Tree.png. Hit Ctrl+A to select the tree, Ctrl+C to copy it and Ctrl+W to close it down. Back on the stag image, hit Ctrl+V to paste in the tree, then hit Ctrl+T to go into Free Transform mode. To resize the tree, pull the corner handles of the bounding box. Drag the tree so that one of the branches covers the left antler. If you need to rotate the tree, drag the cursor outside the bounding box. Hit Return to confirm the changes.

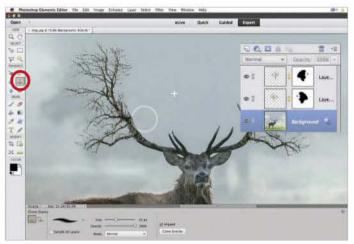


Mask off some of the branches

Go to your Layers palette (Window-Layers) and click on the Add Layer Mask icon. Click on the Brush tool from the Toolbox and in the Tool Options bar, select a hard-edged brush with an Opacity of 100%. Hit D followed by X for a

black foreground colour – any area you now paint on the image will be masked off and hidden from view. Mask off the other branches around your 'antler' branch. To fine-tune your branch resize the brush with the [and] keys. When you have the branch masked off and in place, switch to a soft brush with a low **Opacity** setting, and blend in the area where the tree joins the original antler.





Remove the original antlers

Hit Ctrl+J to duplicate the Layer. Now go to
Edit→Transform→Flip Horizontal in Photoshop or
Image→Rotate→Flip Layer Horizontal in Elements. Now use
the Move tool to drag the duplicated branch to cover the right antler.
To remove the original antlers beneath, select the Clone Stamp tool
and make sure Sample all Layers is unticked in the Tool Options bar.
Click on the Background Layer, then hold Alt and click on a clean area
of background to sample the pixels. Release Alt and brush over the
antlers to paint the sampled area over them, making them disappear.



Add mist and tone your pic

Go to Layer→New Layer, followed by Filter→Render→
Clouds. In the Layers palette, reduce the Layer's Opacity to
30%. Select the Eraser tool and using a soft-edged brush,
remove the fog effect so it just covers the base of the pic. Go to
Layer→Flatten Image to crunch all the Layers into one, then hit Ctrl+U
to bring up Hue/Saturation. Tick the Colorize box, then reduce
Saturation to 10. Drag the Hue slider to set the colour. A value of 185
was used to get a cool clue tone. Click OK. Now go to Image→
Adjustments→Brightness/Contrast (Photoshop) or Enhance→Adjust
Lighting→Brightness/Contrast (Elements). Drag Contrast to 30 and
Brightness to 20, then hit OK. To complete the image, save your pic
under a new name via File→Save As.

TRANSFORM RAWS WITH LIGHTROOM



Take full control of the tones and colours in your images to give them a striking artistic finish

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY BEN DAVIS

DVOCATES OF
LIGHTROOM will often
declare they favour the
post-processing software through a
desire for 'keeping it real'. The
controls are much more akin to what
would be available in a traditional
photographic darkroom, after all.

While that's certainly true, it is still possible to make dramatic adjustments to your RAW files, so you can really get your creative juices flowing. There's a near limitless number of paths your picture's journey could take, and you're the one in the driving seat.

You don't have access to Layers or Filters – like those found in Lightroom's more powerful sibling – Photoshop. But you do have full control over the contrast of tones, the appearance of colour and the detail, plus other artistic effects.

At a glance

YOU'LL LEARN How to process, adjust and apply effects to a RAW file to produce results with a stylised look

YOU'LL NEED Lightroom 5/CC or Photoshop CS6/CC

TIME REQUIRED 15 minutes
DIFFICULTY LEVEL Medium



On the disc

VIDEO LESSONS Watch as Ben runs through this absorbing Lightroom technique on your computer screen.

START IMAGE Try out the project using the *Moscow Marketdng* RAW file. The picture can be found in the Start Images folder.

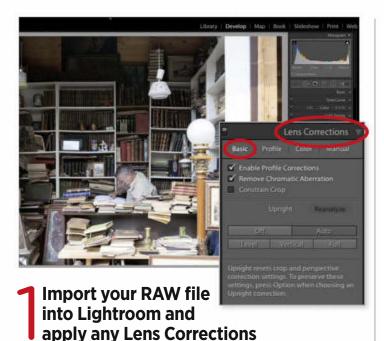


This portrait of an antique book seller – taken is Izmaylovo market, Moscow – has plenty of detail and the opportunity to make a creative crop. The tones can be enhanced to create a vintage feel, to echo the subject's trade for a stronger narrative.







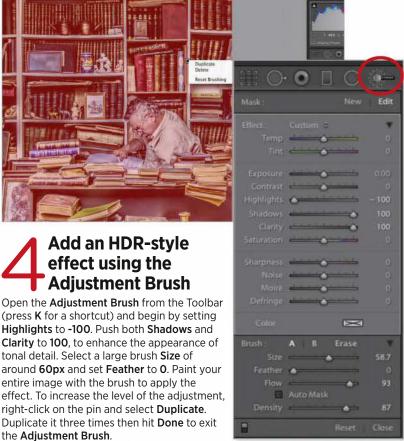


Open your RAW file in Lightroom, or import *Moscow Market.dng* from the Start Images folder. To do this, click the **Import** button at the bottom left of the **Library** module, and navigate to the location of your file. Once it has been imported, click on the **Develop** module at the top to enter the editing mode. Scroll down to **Lens Corrections**, and within **Basic** make sure you tick **Enable Profile Corrections** and **Remove Chromatic Aberration**. Under **Profile**, check that the correct lens has been detected by Lightroom. If you're using the Start Image, it should be a **Nikon AF-S 24-70mm f/2.8G ED** lens. If you're using your own image, check that the lens profile matches the one you used. Within the **Upright** controls, click **Auto** to correct the perspective.



drop-down **Aspect** menu. This will give your image a perfectly square crop, and will help to mimic the vintage aesthetic of Polaroid, or more recently, Instagram. To adjust the size of your crop, drag the handles around the bounding box, until you are happy with the framing. Once satisfied, click **Done** to exit the **Crop Overlay tool**.

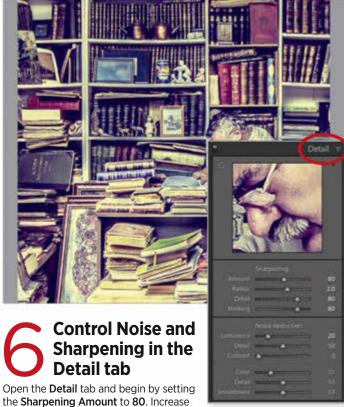








Scroll to the **Tone Curve** tab and click the icon to edit the **Point Curve**. Change the **Channel** from **RGB** to **Blue**, to adjust only the blue tones in the image. Click the start point of the tone curve and push the line upwards towards the lower horizontal marker – this boosts the blues in the shadows. Click and pull down at the end of the curve to the opposite marker to reduce the Blues in the highlights. Now set **Channel** to **Green**, and add a subtle S-curve to complete the vintage toning. Click and drag down the Green curve at the first quarter integer, and push the curve slightly upwards at the final quarter integer. This adds contrast to the green tones in the image, to give a more artistic colour effect.



Radius to 2.0 and push Detail to 80. Hold down the Alt key as you adjust the Masking slider to see an edge mask of the areas affected by sharpening. Only the white areas have sharpening applied. The example image was set to 80. Under Noise Reduction, set the Luminance slider to 20 to smooth out some of the grain.



Post-Crop Vignetting, set Style to Highlight Priority from the drop-down menu. Pull the Amount slider to -100 to set a dark border to the edge of the image. Set Midpoint to 0 and Roundness to -100 to create a square frame to the vignette. Adjust the Feather slider to 85, to slightly soften the edge of the vignette effect. To complete the arty, vintage look, add Grain to the image to give it a retro texture. Set Amount to 80, Size to 25 and increase the Roughness slider to 60.



box. Within Export Location select the destination for where the new file will be saved. Use the options to give it a Custom name, then select JPEG from Image Format, and set Quality to 90. Click Export at the bottom right to create the new version of your image.

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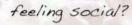
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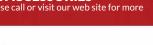


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TWO PHOTOSHOP EXPERTS, TWO IMAGES, 10 MINUTES. MATTY & ANDY DUEL OVER A SHOT IN NEED OF A REVAMP!



On the CD

VIDEO LESSONS

See how Matty and Andy completed their techniques in two videos on your computer screen.

START IMAGES

Church.jpg and Moon.jpg can be found in the Start Images folder.

At a glance

YOU'LL LEARN How to enhance shots

YOU'LL NEED

Elements/Photoshop **TIME REQUIRED**10 mins

DIFFICULTY LEVEL

Medium

VERY ISSUE WE LET OUR EXPERTS LOOSE on a picture and see how they can reinvent it in Photoshop. This month, our experts have a real challenge on their hands. We've presented them with a classic village view that suffers from the harsh lighting that comes as a consequence of shooting in the midday sun. How can our pixel-pushing gurus use Elements to refine and enhance the lighting and create excitement in a fairly standard scene? There's a huge variety of methods that could be used,

and because photographers see the world in different ways, their approaches and results will no doubt reflect this.

Matty and Andy have both sketched out their battle plans for this competitive clash – just flick over the page to discover how they set about transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary! Once you've done this, watch their two video lessons to see exactly how they created their images, then load up the *Church* and *Moon* Start Images and have a go yourself!

The rules of engagement

Some guidelines were needed to stop our experts wandering off piste. To keep the playing field level, both contenders were armed with a copy of Photoshop Elements, and were only allowed to use the two pics supplied. No other images were permitted and a time limit of 10 minutes was enforced. This month's judge is *Digital Photo's* editor, Jon. He wants to see a more exciting finish to this sunny scene, and with decades of photography and Photoshop experience under his belt, he's well placed to pick a winner.

Jon, the judge

Photoshop Genius PIXELS AT DAWN

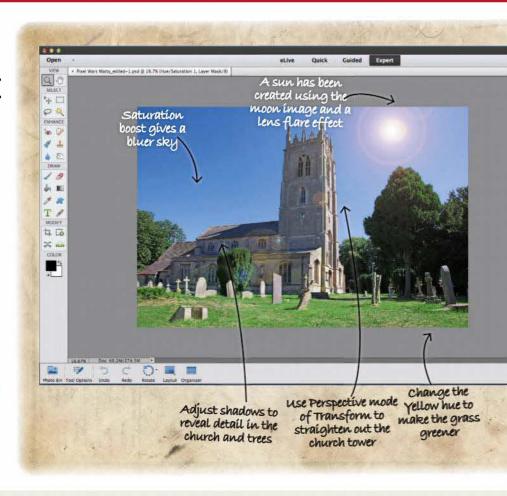
MATTY'S SUNNY LENS FLARE SCENE

HURCHES ARE GREAT locations to shoot, because in the UK you're never more than a couple of miles from one. This image shows an effective composition, but it suffers from a number of problems because of the time of day it was taken. The harsh sunlight casts the church (and some of the trees) into deep shadow, so the exposure needs to be rebalanced and detail extracted. The sun itself isn't in the frame, but adding a digital sun gives context and helps justify the bold contrast. Last but not least, the image has been taken with a wide-angle lens causing

converging verticals – where tall buildings appear to fall backwards. All of these issues can be addressed using the features within Photoshop Elements, such as the **Perspective** transform

Perspective transform tool and a Shadows/ Highlights adjustment. The result will improve the image no end!





ANDY'S DAY-TO-NIGHT CONVERSION

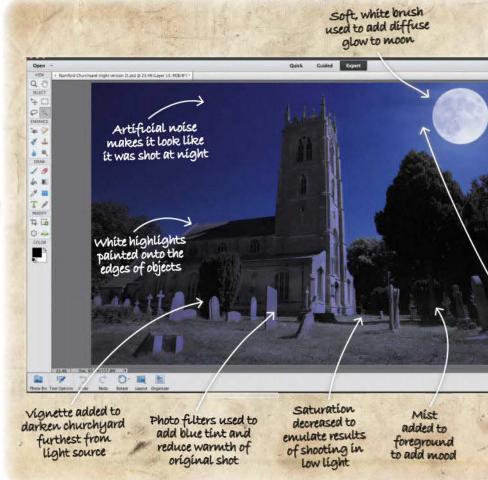
HANGING THE LIGHTING of a scene can be tricky, especially when the original image is so high in contrast. To add a creative spin, I'll have some fun and turn this into a moody night scene. The problem is, the moon doesn't create harsh shadows like those present in the original, so the first step will be to reduce the contrast.

After that I'll darken the scene by duplicating the

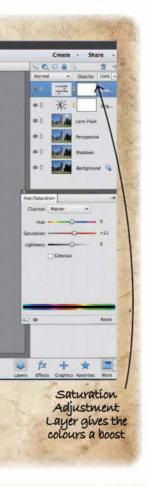
Background Layer and changing the Blending Mode to Multiply. I'll also use Hue/Saturation and Photo Filter Adjustment Layers to give the image a cool, blue tint. Next I'll drop in the shot of the moon and create a glow around it with the Brush tool. I'll paint in some new highlights, again using the Brush tool, and create a vignette using the Gradient tool in its Radial mode.

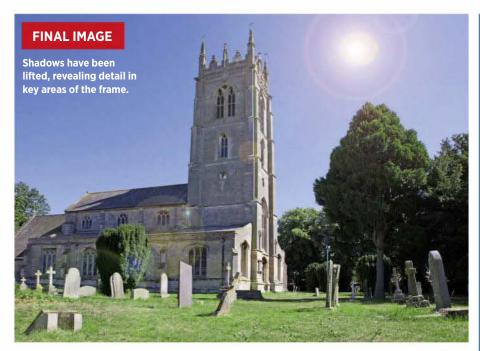
To add more mood I'll create some clouds and place them in front of the moon, then I'll add some Noise so it looks like a real night shot.











Try it for yourself

- Increase saturation for richer, bluer skies
- Adjust Shadows and Highlights to reveal detail in underexposed areas
- Introduce a sun and lens flare effect to enhance the scene's lighting
- Correct converging verticals on the tower using the Perspective mode of Transform
- Refine and adjust colour tones for a more realistic grass hue
- See Matty's video for the full technique

The final verdict

Giving our experts two images to merge and use together was always going to lead to some different creative approaches.

Matty's sun-soaked scene uses the moon image with a good deal of artistic licence. Rather than use it as a floating lunar element, he's employed it as a foundation to create a digital sun! This pushes the boundaries a little, but brings context to the scene. You can almost picture yourself sweating under those rays!

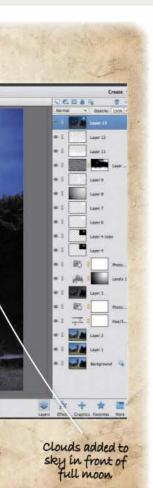
Swapping day for night instantly switches the scene's mood

Andy's approach is more of a visual transformation. Not only has he positioned the moon large in the frame, he has also changed the time of the day the picture was taken, and turned it into a moody night scene.

Swapping day for night instantly switches the atmosphere, and reinvents the shot as something much more spooky – it looks like a still from a Tim Burton movie!

Both versions have their own merits and bring something new to the original, but Andy's night scene gets my vote for pushing the pixels that little bit further.







Try it for yourself

- Decrease contrast, exposure and saturation
- Use a duplicate black & white layer to adjust the luminosity
- Tint image blue using Hue/Saturation and Photo Filter layers
- Add full moon image to sky
- Brighten moon and darken courtyard to create realistic lighting
- Add clouds and mist to sky and foreground respectively
- Watch Andy's video to see the technique in-depth

YOUR PICTURES

Want your shots to benefit from our supportive expert advice? Send your best pics in and see what we can do: dpimages@bauermedia.co.uk

Your experts





Digital Photo's technical editor,
Dan, and assistant editor,
Matty, are on hand to help with
insightful shooting and editing
tips. To have your work shown
and assessed in Your Pictures,
email a selection of no more
than five images to the address
on the left, and put Your
Pictures in the subject box.

> **VULTURE**by Brian Holland

Camera Nikon D300 & Sigma 150-500mm f/5-6.3 lens **Exposure** 1/250sec @ f/5.6, ISO 400 **Software** Elements



I borrowed a friend's long lens on a trip to Cumbernauld World of Wings. This Rueppells Griffin Vulture was beautifully lit by a

skylight above, and I had to get a shot. I opened my aperture to f/5.6 for a shallow depth-of-field, and then boosted the ISO to 400 for a faster shutter speed. In Elements I lifted the exposure, applied some sharpening and converted the image to mono.

DAN SAYS "Brian's bagged a fantastic bird portrait that's packed with character and drama. His mono conversion is a great idea that works really strongly. It certainly makes the most of the low-key lighting pouring in from the skylight above. A telephoto lens lets you get closer to wildlife subjects and Brian has used a 150-500mm lens to good effect on his Nikon D300. He's zoomed in tightly and composed a lovely head-and-shoulders shot.

"I love the eyes-off expression Brian has captured, but there's a big blank area to the right that puts the shot out of balance. Although this would be the perfect spot for a headline in a nature magazine, I'd remove this 'dead space' altogether if the image is to stand on its own. Doing so will immediately create a much stronger composition. You can make this crop this in Camera Raw or Photoshop using the Crop tool. For a powerful, square format, set the Ratio

to 1:1. With this done, you can drag a square crop over the vulture to fill the frame with detail. The square crop not only loses the dead space, it also positions the vulture's head on an intersecting third line for a classic, well-balanced composition.

"The arresting feature of this portrait shot has to be those striking eyes. And although the pic is rightfully dark and moody, the vulture's features have suffered and are heavily shaded. Brian shot in RAW format, which records much more detail than a standard JPEG

Sharpening the eyes makes them the key to this wonderful shot!

file, so the detail in this darker area can easily be restored using the Shadows slider (see panel below right). Bringing the eyes out of the shade balances the exposure without damaging the dark, brooding mood of Brian's original."

MATTY SAYS "I have to agree with Dan – the eyes are the heart of this wonderful portrait. But there are very few pictures that wouldn't benefit from a little sharpening, and a small amount of extra 'bite' on this vulture's head would really help its bold features to stand out. Photoshop can only increase apparent sharpness by applying extra contrast to edges within an image, so

you can't turn an out-of-focus shot into a pin-sharp one. However, it can work wonders on a sharply-focused image like this one, as it'll help to emphasise the most important details. Used indiscriminately, sharpening can exaggerate digital Noise, so it's best to use it sparingly and on specific areas.

"To do this, select the Lasso tool and draw a Selection around the part you want to sharpen. To soften the edge of the area, go to Refine Edge and increase the Feather value before clicking OK. Punch this Selection into a new Layer with Ctrl+J and then sharpen the details by going to Filter→Sharpen→Unsharp Mask. How much you use depends on the image, but an Amount of 150%, a Radius of 1px and a Threshold of 0 is a good starting point.

"The tweaks we've made are fairly minor, but the end result is a highimpact image that any wildlife photographer would be proud of."



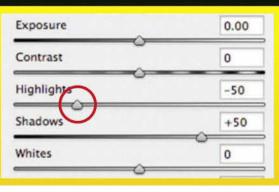


Expert advice Bring back lost details with a RAW edit

RAW files are packed with exposure information and the sliders in Adobe Camera Raw give you the ability to pull back highlight and shadow details. The vulture's face in this pic is very dark but boosting the Shadows slider to a positive value of around +50 reveals the bird's features. The bright wing tips are at the other end of the scale because they're very close to burning out to pure white.

Pulling the Highlights slider to a negative value restores some of that highlight detail and makes for a better-balanced image.

When adjusting Highlights, Shadows, Whites and Blacks, a good tip is to hold down the Alt key. This will show you where the brightest and darkest areas of your pic are clipping and losing detail. When you're done, hit Open Image to load the shot into Photoshop.



Boosting Shadows and reducing highlights is a common practice in RAW software, as it helps to balance the tones in high contrast images.

YOUR PICTURES

BEACH SMILES by Brent Jansen

Camera Nikon D7100 & 18-105mm f/3.5-5.6 lens **Exposure** 1/125sec @ f/11, ISO 100



I took this photo at Ballywalter Beach, Northern Ireland. I had walked the length of the beach, stopping to take photos. As I returned, I noticed how the path and beach meet each other

and thought this would make an interesting photo. No sooner had I sat down to enjoy the sunshine, I heard the sound of hooves nearby. I thought the approaching horses would add something to the shot.

MATTY SAYS "Brent's beach scene shows the value in reacting to opportunities as they present themselves. While setting up for a landscape shot, he has switched tack to make use of a new focal point trotting by!

"There's a lot to like in this shot. The sky is fantastic with its display of puffy white clouds, and the diagonal line of rock-strewn texture acts as a strong compositional vehicle to carry the viewer's eye into the frame. The position of the horses doesn't quite work for me though, as they're too close to the edge of the frame to keep the shot balanced.

"Cropping vertically and losing the right



half of the frame would be one way to address this, but it would become a horse-riding portrait and the context of the beach would be lost. A better way, that would retain the environment and balance the composition, would be to remove the second horse altogether. This would allow the remaining rider to dominate the frame. It might look like an impossible task, but there's enough detail around the horse to allow a seamless job with the Clone Stamp tool.

"By Alt+clicking to sample the pixels from 'clean' areas, then releasing Alt and painting over the horse in small steps, you can rebuild the area as if the horse had never been there. The key to accurate cloning is to use the appropriate size brush for the area you are trying to repair.

"Removing the horse makes a big difference to the composition, but there are a few more adjustments that will further improve the shot. As Brent has reacted to events and



taken the image quickly, the horizon is not level. While dramatically-sloping horizons can add energy to a composition, a tilt of just a few degrees always looks like an error, so it's worth correcting this. To do it in Photoshop, select the Crop tool, and in the Tool Options bar click on Straighten. Click on the horizon, drag along it, and release the mouse to see a levelled crop. If you're using Elements you can do the same using the Straighten tool found in the Toolbox.

"Lastly, while the colours in Brent's frame are accurate, the high sun leaves the shot feeling a little on the cool side. To make the image warmer and more inviting, create a Levels Adjustment Layer, and click where it says RGB to see a drop-down list of the three colour channels. Select Red, and move the middle slider a little to the left. Now select Blue, and move it to the right. This creates an amber colour cast, which gently warms up the image. The final touch would be to add some extra saturation to the sky (see below).

"Although these changes don't truly reflect the scene Brent captured, they do help to improve the picture if you regard it as a standalone image. What's more, the mood of the shot remains unchanged."

Expert advice Making blue skies more saturated



Layers palette and select Hue/Saturation from the list. Click on the Master box and select Blue

from the drop-down menu. Using the sliders

you can now adjust the colour, intensity and

the brightness of the blue areas in the scene.

No other colours will be affected.



BLACKSMITH by Jack Powers

Camera Canon EOS 40D & EF-S 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 lens Exposure 1/45sec @ f/3.5, ISO 100 Software Canon DPP



I was supposed to meet up with a few fellow photographers to shoot a model in the Old Cowtown Living Museum in Wichita, Kansas. I got there before them and decided to walk

around the town. It wasn't long before I arrived at this blacksmith's. I had a shot in mind – I wanted to catch the hammer striking to tell a story. I managed to get this pic, which I brightened in Canon's DPP RAW software. I then applied a preset using the Topaz Labs Adjust 5 plugin for a warmer finish.

DAN SAYS "This is a fantastic environmental portrait that has bags of character. The metal scattered across the workshop gives the picture a real, honest feel and adds lots of extra detail too. Jack has made some good adjustments to the RAW file, lifting the exposure and adding a little sharpening. But, on close inspection, it is possible to see a fair amount of digital Noise. Jack used a low ISO setting of 100 on his Canon 40D, so this is most likely a result of pushing the exposure on the RAW file.

"There's also a slight colour cast resulting from the mix of daylight coming from the right, and the warm red glow of the furnace. This makes the shot look a little unnatural. Both these issues are easy to fix in RAW software, however.

"In Adobe Camera Raw, click on the Detail tab, and under Noise Reduction, drag the Luminance slider to around 30. That will smooth out the Noise without losing too much detail. To cure the colour cast, click on the Basic tab and drag the Temperature slider until you find a happy medium between the blue colour of the daylight and the orange-red warmth from the fire."



MATTY SAYS "I like this shot too, and love the way the anvil and forge add warmth, colour and strong secondary points of interest. That said, some minor compositional changes would make it even better. Jack used the wide end of his kit lens, but because he's tilting the lens down, the vertical lines are leaning. This is a little distracting, but is easy to fix (see below). Another issue of using wide lenses is the temptation to include too much in the frame. There's some unnecessary space on the right, and to increase impact, I'd crop this out to focus attention on the blacksmith and the fire. With these tweaks, this pic is a real winner!"

Expert advice Correct lens distortion in Photoshop

Hit Ctrl+A to select the whole pic followed by Ctrl+T to put it into Free Transform mode

- you'll now be able to see a bounding box around the pic. To straighten vertical lines, hold down the Ctrl key and drag the corner handles to get them true. When you're done hit Enter to confirm the changes.



YOUR PICTURES

PATHFINDER by Dave Hodgkiss

Camera Panasonic DMC-LX3s

Exposure 1/125sec @ f/4, ISO 100 Software Lightroom 5



I always take a camera out with me and, when I was walking down from the summit of Mam Tor in the Peak District, I noticed the sky becoming a bit ominous. I had a quick look around me to

see what would make an interesting pic and I saw the fence to my left and the path to my right. I liked how they both seemed to disappear into the distance so I got down low to fill the frame and took the shot.

MATTY SAYS "Dave's image is proof that you don't need the bells and whistles of a DSLR to capture a good landscape. A strong, carefully considered composition trumps everything else when it comes to scenic shots, and using the 24mm wide setting on his compact camera, Dave has recorded an image that's bursting with great technique.

"Firstly, the location is a winner. The ridge between Mam Tor and Lose Hill in Derbyshire offers dramatic views of the rugged Peak District, but that alone is not enough to create a good landscape. To bring the location to life as an image, Dave has followed the Rule of Thirds, and included two-parts land and one part sky to give a balanced frame. What's more, the peaks on the ridge are positioned on an intersecting third, further strengthening the framing. As the icing on the compositional cake, Dave has taken a low viewpoint to make the most of the foreground, and included the fence and path on either side to frame the image and lead the viewer in.

"There's lots to like about this atmospheric shot, but I'd have been tempted to get even lower to the ground, and a bit nearer to the foreground rock. Doing this would have separated the distant peaks from the horizon a little more, and would also have made that wonderfully textured rock a bit more dominant in the frame.

"The other thing I'm not quite sure about is Dave's wide-format crop. Although it makes the path more evident on the right, it also gives lots of valuable frame space to the less-interesting valley floor in the background. I'd be a bit more ruthless and crop this out, as its detracting from, rather than adding to, the drama on display.

"To create more impact in the foreground, I'd use the Lasso tool to select the area, then copy and paste it onto a new Layer. Hit Ctrl+T to enter Free Transform mode, and you can drag out the bounding box to resize the Layer, stretching the foreground and exaggerating its size and perspective. A soft edged eraser will quickly hide the join to make it seamless. To further enhance the drama, I'd use the Burn tool to darken the clouds and inject extra mood to the sky (see panel).

"These tweaks are subtle, but help increase the impact already present in Dave's shot."

Expert advice Darken skies using the Burn tool

The Burn tool
has its origins
in the 'wet'
darkroom and
can be used
to darken
areas
selectively.
It's grouped
with the
Dodge and
Sponge tools.
In the Tool
Options bar,
the Range



option allows you to select which tones you want to darken (Highlights, Midtones or Shadows) and the Exposure option controls how aggressively the tool works. This needs to be set very low for photographic use, so start with a setting of around 4%. Once set up, you can paint your changes directly onto the scene. Build up the effect gradually, so you don't overdo it.











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AFRICAN LEOPARD by Andre van Zyl

Camera Nikon D800 & 200-400mm f/4 lens
Exposure 1/1000sec @ f/7.1, ISO 400 Software Photoshop



I took this shot of a Leopard at Jaydee's Camp in the Timbavati region of Kruger National Park, in South Africa. It was taken from a Land Rover and I was fortunate that the guide

positioned the vehicle well for a shot, even though the light was not great. I have a large number of leopard shots taken over two days in the Park, so would like to know what I can do to improve my efforts? I am a novice with Photoshop, so apply basic tweaks like cropping, Levels adjustments and Saturation. But I am sure the shot can be improved with more advanced Photoshop work, so I've sent you the original file without any changes applied, and would appreciate your advice.

DAN SAYS "Looking at the original picture, the obvious problem is underexposure, but I can see that there's a great shot lurking in the dark. In fact, I think it has the potential to be an absolute stunner! If Andre has a selection of shots like this from his two-day jaunt to the Kruger Park, then his portfolio will be bursting with great leopard images.

"Starting with the exposure, it is quite dramatically undercooked, and a quick way to check this is to open the Levels palette in Elements or Photoshop (shortcut Ctrl+L). If the Histogram graph is piled up to the left and stops short of the right hand side, it means there's an absence of genuine highlights in the image. But if you're going to have an exposure problem, it's far better for a shot to be under rather than overexposed.

If you blow out detail in the highlights, there's very little you can do to bring it back. You'll always find good detail in midtones and lighter shadows though, and this can be retrieved to balance the exposure.

"It's better to do this using the extra data in a RAW file, but Andre has sent us a JPEG. This is no bad thing, as sometimes a JPEG may be all you have. Knowing how to enhance one arms you with an important set of skills that will come in handy time after time.

"The starting point is to create a Levels
Adjustment Layer and move the Shadows
and Highlights sliders so the Histogram goes
from edge to edge. Once this is done, move
the Midtones slider to the left to brighten the
image. Your colours may look washed out after
this, so create another Levels Adjustment
Layer and select the Red Channel from the

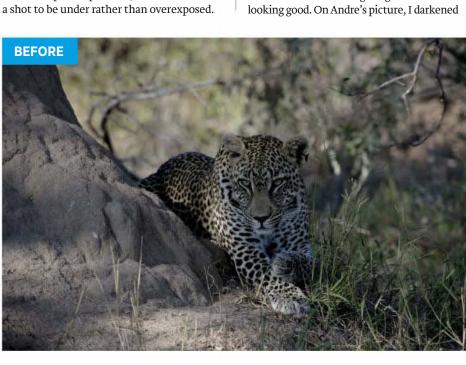
The obvious problem is underexposure, but this shot has the potential to be an absolute stunner!

RGB drop-down menu in the palette. Move the Midtones slider left to increase the red content, and then select the Blue Channel and move it to the right to warm up the colours.

"The next stage is to work on specific areas of the scene. Use the Lasso tool to make a Selection of an area you want to enhance – such as the leopard's face – and then click Refine Edge and increase the Feather slider to soften the edge. Create another Levels Adjustment Layer and tweak the contrast and colour in this isolated area using the sliders in the same way. You may need to make a number of these around the image to get the tones looking good. On Andre's picture, I darkened

the rock on the left in this way. Because Adjustment Layers have Masks attached, you can use a soft-edged brush to allow the Levels adjustments to appear elsewhere on the image. Just paint black into the mask to hide the effect and white to reveal it.

"To make the colours look richer I then created a Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer. You can boost the colour intensity globally by increasing the Saturation slider, but to retain more control, select the individual colours from the Master box and boost or reduce the Saturation for each, until you get a good effect. On this image I boosted the Yellows and Greens, and reduced the Blues and Cyans to remove any blue cast appearing in the white parts of the leopard's coat. The next step was to make a crop. Andre has placed the subject very centrally in the original, and a tighter





composition would make the leopard dominate the frame. It's usually better to crop before making other editing changes, otherwise you can waste time making adjustments that end up being cropped out. But when rescuing underexposed pics, it's easier to crop towards the end of your image-editing, after you've revealed the detail in the scene.

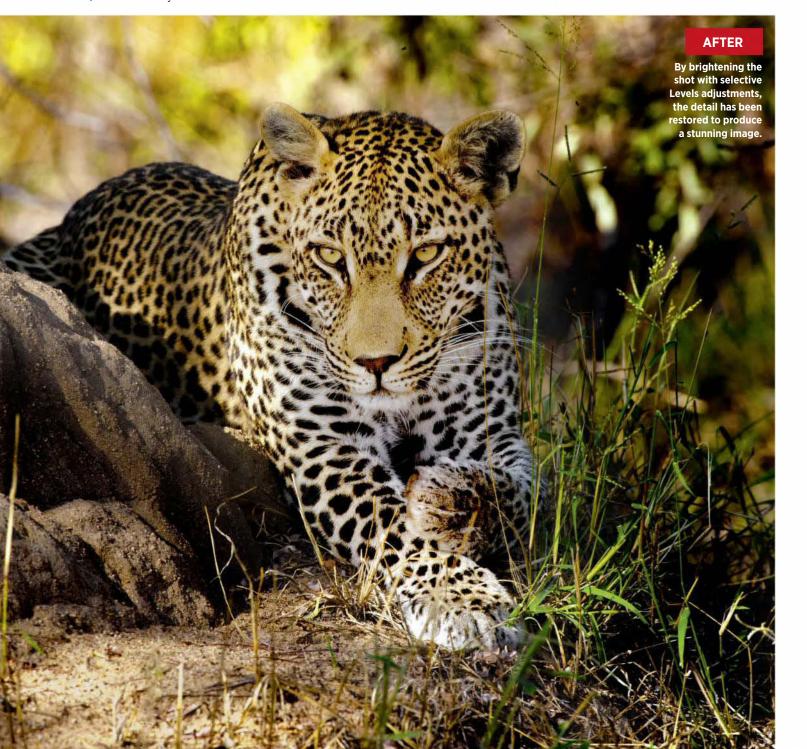
"The last thing to do is add a little sharpening. Andre's shot is already pin-sharp on the eyes, but a little sharpening adds extra definition. To apply some, I hit Ctrl+Shift+Alt+E to merge everything into a new Layer, then made a feathered Selection of the face. I put this area onto its own Layer with Ctrl+J, then used the same Unsharp Mask technique as for Brian's Vulture pic on p96. The end result is a beautiful shot, and if Andre's other pics polish up as well as this, he'll have a truly wonderful selection."

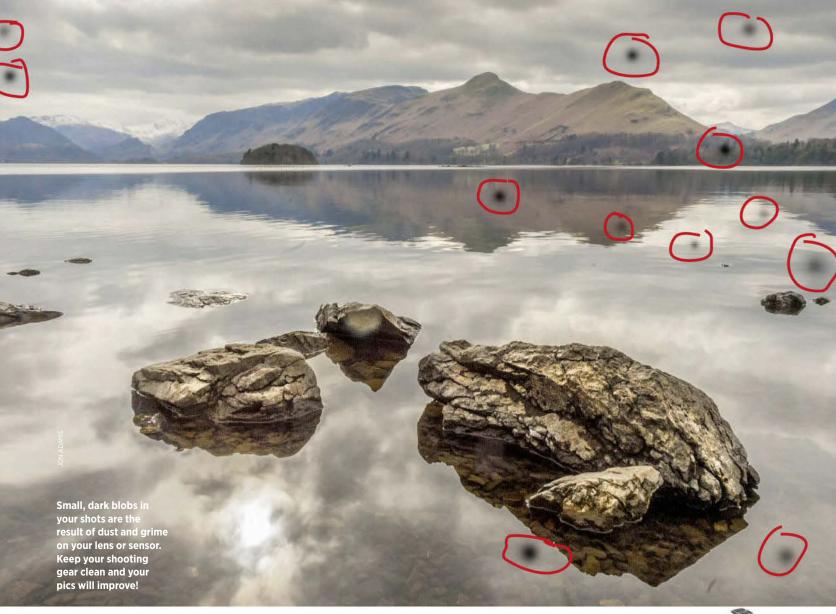
Expert advice Using Adjustment Layers to rescue shots

Andre was enquiring about more advanced Photoshop techniques to rescue his Leopard pic, but although our Layers palette may look quite complex, the seven Layers are all contributing to the final image with simple changes.

By breaking down your editing changes into simple events and isolating each on a separate Adjustment Layer, you stay in complete control of the final result. Even better, by double clicking the Adjustment Layer icons, you can go back into the palette and fine-tune the settings used at any point.







CLEAN YOUR GEAR FOR BETTER PICS



Rid your camera equipment of dust and grime and you'll not only give your kit a longer lifespan – you'll improve image quality too!

WORDS & PICS BY DAN MOLD

Dust and grime are the enemies of your precious camera kit. Although they may seem insignificant, particles of dirt will degrade image quality, grind their way into your camera's moving parts and seize up your tripod legs if left unchecked.

Cleaning your kit is something to incorporate into your everyday, shooting life. But cameras and lenses are delicate creatures and you need to go about the process with care. The special coating on lenses can be damaged and your camera's sensor can be scratched if it's not

cleaned properly. But don't worry – over the next few pages we show you how to keep every aspect of your camera kit like new – and how to do it the right way.

How often you should clean your gear depends on the item in question. Unless you habitually go out on very muddy or sandy shoots, you probably only need to clean your bag and tripod once or twice a year. As for your camera and lenses, more regular cleaning on a weekly or monthly basis is a good idea, as the process allows you to inspect for wear and tear.

For most photographers, the first signs of dust problems occur when you see the evidence on your images. When dust finds its way onto your sensor, you'll see small, dark orbs and splodges in the brighter parts of your pics. You can remove these foreign bodies in imaging software, but cleaning your gear in the first place will save you hours of meticulous remedial work in Photoshop.

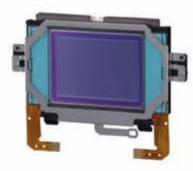
There's no greater incentive for kit cleaning than better picture quality and longer lasting gear, so let's get to it...

SENSOR CARE

Does your sensor need a clean? Take the test

Each time you swap lenses on a DSLR or CSC, you expose the sensor to dust hanging in the air. When these particles settle on the chip, you'll find small, fuzzy black spots in your pics. These are more visible at small apertures, and although more stubborn

spots will remain in the same place, they'll be most obvious in bright areas of your shots. By using our simple test, you'll find out how grubby your sensor is, and by following the cleaning process, you can eliminate any problems.



Take a picture of some blank A4 paper

Draw a cross in the centre of a sheet of A4 paper and Blu-tack it on a wall. Set your camera up on a tripod and frame up so that the paper fills the whole frame. Autofocus on the cross in the middle of the paper and then switch to MF to lock the focus distance. Put your camera into Aperture priority mode (A or Av) and dial in an aperture of f/11. Add one stop of positive Exposure Compensation using the +/- button or command in the menu. Just remember to reset this when you've completed your sensor test. Now take a shot.



Inspect the shot for dust spots

Hit the Playback button on your DSLR or CSC to review the pic you've just taken. You can zoom in on the back of the camera or you can increase the contrast in your image in Photoshop to make any dust spots easier to see. Now scroll across the whole image looking for blemishes. If you find any, they'll appear in every image you take, so your sensor would benefit from a clean. See below for how you can do this.



Expert tip! Clean up in Photoshop

Don't worry if you find dust spots! These blemishes can be removed with a few clicks in Photoshop or Elements. Click the **Spot Healing Brush** tool to make it active, then zoom in with Ctrl+Plus. Hold the Spacebar to bring up the Hand tool and drag your way around the image. When you find a dust spot hover your cursor over it and resize your brush with the [and] keys so that it's a little larger than the spot. Click to automatically remove it.



MAKE YOUR SENSOR LIKE NEW IN 3 EASY STEPS



Shake off the dust

Most modern DSLRs have a built-in sensor clean facility. This is usually set to vibrate the sensor when you power up or down to shake off loose dust. You can also engage it manually on a Canon DSLR via Menu→Sensor Cleaning→Clean Now. On a Nikon model you need to go to Menu→Setup Menu→Clean Image Sensor→Clean Now. Other makes have similar options. Once you've done this, repeat the above test and see if it has shaken the dust off.



Use an air blower

For more stubborn dirt, take your lens off and lock the mirror up to reveal the sensor. To do this on a

Canon model go to Menu→Sensor

Cleaning→Clean Manually (on a Nikon it's Menu→Setup Menu→Lock mirror up for cleaning). Hold your camera facing down and give it a few blasts with an air blower. Make sure you don't insert the nozzle into the body, where it could cause damage. Now repeat the white paper test to see if the dust has gone.



Swab it or send it off

If you've tried an air blower multiple times and the dust is stuck fast, you have two options. The first is to use a sensor swab kit to wipe the dust off the sensor – most come with a special cleaning fluid, too. But if you're not confident in doing this yourself you can send off your camera for professional cleaning. Park Cameras offer a sensor-cleaning service from £30 for APS-C sized chips. Visit: www.parkcameras.com/sensor-cleaning-service



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CLEAN YOUR GEAR

LENS CLEANING

Dust off your lens in 60 secs!

When taking a picture, your camera records the light reflecting off the scene. This light hits your lens first so it's really important to keep your optics clean. You should never apply a liquid to a lens element unless it's specifically designed for this, because special lens coatings can easily be impaired. Just like a grubby camera sensor, a dirty lens will cause image defects, so here's how to keep yours like new.



A UV filter has a minimal effect on your images but can protect your lens' front element from dings and scratches. It's no surprise then that many of us use a screw-in UV filter as a shield as it's much cheaper to replace a damaged or dirty filter than your front element.

To clean it, you'll need to remove the filter and give both sides a good blast with a rocket blower to remove any loose dust. For more stubborn grime you'll need to use a Lenspen or microfibre cloth. If you've got a greasy fingerprint on the front, huff your breath on it to form a little condensation and wipe it evenly with a microfibre cloth.



Use air power on the front and rear lens elements

Just like with a camera's sensor, the front and rear lens elements are very delicate and should only be physically touched as a last resort. To clean them, the first port of call should be a powerful blast from an air blower. It may take several pumps to blow off the more stubborn particles. Be careful to keep a short distance between the nozzle of your rocket blower and the optic as you don't want the two to make contact.



Expert tip! Clean the contacts

It's all too easy to get your lens optics looking pristine and shiny, but overlook one of its most important components - the contacts. Dirty contacts can cause all kinds of problems, including focusing errors. The best way to clean the contacts is to dip a Q-tip in a small amount of Isopropyl alcohol and run it over the metal contacts. This will remove any grime or dirt to improve the connection between lens and camera body, and keep it running in full working order.

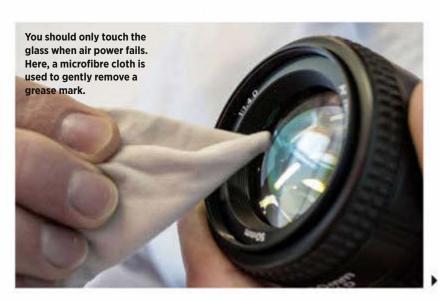


Get rid of stubborn dirt with a Lenspen and microfibre cloth

Sometimes, no matter how hard you squeeze your air blower, some dust just will not budge. If this is the case, the next step is to use the brush on a lens pen and gently brush the dust loose. You can then use your rocket blower to blast it off the glass.

For grease marks like finger prints you'll want to huff your breath on to the element to form a little condensation, just like with filters. With this done, give it a gentle, circular wipe with a microfibre cloth, then remove any remaining loose particles with an air blower.

The lens mount is a hotspot for grime and dirt as this is where the lens makes contact with the body. Run a dry kitchen towel over the mount to clean it, being careful not to transfer any accumulated dirt onto your clean rear element. When finished you need to mount the lens back on your camera or attach the front and rear lens caps to keep atmospheric dust at bay.



BODY PROTECTION

Keep your body in great working order

Your camera body protects the delicate and sensitive electronics inside, so keeping it in top condition is a smart idea. Dirt and sand can find its way into all of the nooks and crannies around a camera body, while dirty contacts can cause AF and info displays to play up. It takes just a few minutes with some basic equipment, so let's get to it!

Keep your camera operating with some TLC.

Camon

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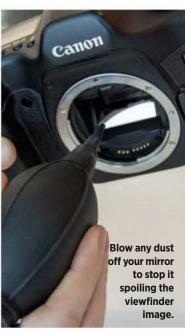
Clean the viewfinder and screen

Slide off your DSLR's eyepiece and clean the outer area with a dry Q-tip to pick up any grime. Then clean the viewfinder optic with a microfibre cloth and put the eyepiece back in place. Rear LCD screens are exposed to finger and nose grease, so clean it by huffing your breath and giving it a wipe with your microfibre cloth.



Blast the mirror

If there's dust on your mirror you may be able to see it when you look through the viewfinder. This dust will not show up on your images because the mirror is flipped up when exposing a shot. But it can be distracting when you're trying to frame up, so it's worth knowing how you can clean it. Some mirrors have special coatings so never use swabs, microfibre cloths or lens pens on them. The only option is air power. Take the lens off, point the camera facing downwards and carefully blast the dust off with an air blower. Then look through the viewfinder to see if it has improved the way the world looks!



Clean the contacts

Just as with the contacts on the lens, dirt and grime on the body's electronic connections can cause all sorts of problems. To clean them, gently run a microfibre cloth over the metal contacts to remove any dust or grit. If communication errors appear when you attach your lenses, you'll need to apply a very small amount of isopropyl alcohol to the end of a Q-tip and run this over the contacts. This will remove any grease that may be impeding the current. Because it's alcohol, it evaporates very quickly, so moisture won't get into the camera body.



Use a Q-tip on ports

Dust gets everywhere, and it accumulates in particular places around a camera body. Open up all of the ports and flaps, and use a Q-tip to wipe out any grime that has found its way into the corners. You'll also want to engage the pop-up flash and gently

clean inside its housing and around the hinges.



ACCESSORY MAINTENANCE

Polish your peripherals

Photographic accessories work alongside your shooting hardware to make great shots possible. Whether it's a tripod for setting up a long exposure or a bag that helps you haul your camera kit from

place to place – they play a crucial role. But they're often neglected, and this can leave you needing to buy replacements sooner than needed. Here's how to get the most out of your peripheral gear...



Vacuum your bag Whether it's a rucksack, pouch or sling, the camera bag is the home for your kit. Because cameras and lenses spend so much time here your bag should be free of dirt and grime. If it's not, sand. mud or even food crumbs will make their way onto - and into - your delicate gear. The best way to clean your bag is to remove everything and discard anything you don't need. Then, fit a nozzle onto your vacuum cleaner, and work through every compartment. When clean, you can re-arrange the padded dividers so that your gear is well-ordered and evenly balanced when carrying it.

Expert tip! Replace zip pullers

Zip pullers see a lot of wear and tear, but if yours is fraying or has sheared off completely, you don't have to struggle. An easy fix is to use a small amount of 3mm paracord. It's a great budget replacement for broken zip pullers – all you need to do is cut it to length and tie it off with a knot. Then apply some heat to the end of the cord with a lit match to stop it from fraying.



Wipe down your tripod

Tripods get more abuse than any other accessory. Dragged over muddy fields, set up in water, and thrown into the back of a car, they really take a beating. Keeping yours in top condition will make it easier to set up when you're shooting. First, extend it to its maximum height and use a wet wipe to clean off any dirt on the leg sections – this will help them extend smoothly.

Next, clean the feet, and if your feet twist to reveal spikes these too should be cleaned as dirt often gathers in the recess. Also check that the leg locks tighten effectively. Some models are userserviceable, and tightening the locks with a socket or hex wrench will ensure they work securely.









Clean and protect your filters

The effects of neutral density and polarising filters cannot be replicated in Photoshop so they make invaluable accessories. However, regular use exposes them to harm, and their delicate surfaces can easily become smeared or scratched if they're not looked after properly. Keeping them clean requires the same process as for screw-in filters – an air blower for dust and a lens cloth with a huff of breath for more stubborn blemishes like grease marks.

Storing your filters correctly is the key to long life, and regarding them as lenses rather than accessories is the right route to take. Screw-in filters usually come with a hard case, so keep them stored inside whenever they're not on a lens. For square filters, use the case they were supplied in, or invest in a good quality soft pouch.

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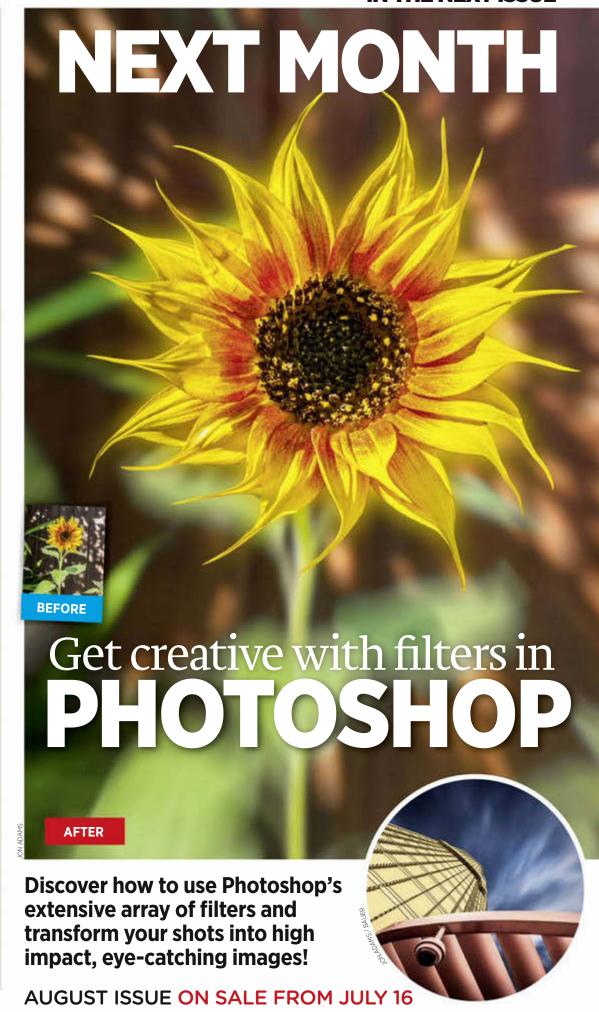
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SCORES 4 OUT OF 5 IN PP TEST JUNE 15 "For CSCs and smaller DSLRs this tripod offers a good level of stability & excellent value"

SCORES 4 OUT OF 5 IN PP TEST JUNE 15

a good level of stability & excellent value"

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"You could pay two to five times this price" F2 mag Camlink tripod test Jan 15

The Camlink CL-CB40

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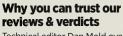
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COMPACT SYSTEM CAMERAS

Panasonic G7

of Panasonic's GH4, the G7 is the firm's latest CSC to offer 4K capabilities. The 16Mp Digital Live MOS sensor is good for stills and movies, and it features a unique set of 4K options dedicato capturing rapid bursts of still images.

Its 4K Burst shooting, Burst (start/stop) and 4K Pre-burst modes are currently exclusiv the G7. Rather than record long streams of 4K, the G7's new 4K photo functions are designed for stills. The 4K Burst Shooting mode records at 30fps and can be used just a high speed drive - you hold the shutter down for as long as you want your burst to go on ' n The standard 4K Burst is different becaus: -(... press the shutter once to start recording and again to stop. The Pre-burst mode automatically records 30 frames before an... after the shutter is pressed, giving you 60 frames to capture the decisive moment. In the Playback mode you can swipe your finger across the 3in 1040k-dot screen to pick the best frame, and save it as a JPEG.

The 4K sequence is recorded at a resolution of 3840x2160 and you can also record movies instead of short bursts for stills using a dedicated movie button. Handling the huge volume of 4K data is Panasonic's Venus



Engine and its processing speed is echoed in the autofocus performance. The Fast AF system, which uses Depth From Defocus (DFD) technology, is said to hunt down a subject in a blistering 0.07sec. There's also a high resolution 2.360k-dot Electronic Viewfinder (EVF) above the monitor.

Available to purchase now, the G7 is priced at £599 body-only, £679 with the 14-42mm lens or £849 with the 14-140mm lens.

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COMPACT SYSTEM CAMERAS

New retro-styled CSC from Fuji

The Fujifilm X-T10 is a retrostyled enthusiast CSC. Its slender dimensions make it considerably more portable than the popular X-T1 and at 381g, it's 61g lighter too.

At the heart of the X-T10 is a 16.3 megapixel APS-C X-Trans CMOS II sensor, which is powered by an EXR Processor II. The camera boasts a maximum native ISO of 6,400 which can be expanded to 51200. Its phase detection AF claims lock on in

0.06sec. It's quick at shooting too, with a max burst of 8fps.

The X-T10 will come to market with a new AF system that offers Fujifilm's standard 49-point Single Point mode, as well as the new Zone and Wide/Tracking modes that use a larger 77-point area to capture moving subjects. On the back is a 3in 920k-dot tilting LCD screen. Above that sits a 2.36-milliondot OLED Electronic Viewfinder which boasts





minimal lag and has a response time of just 0.005 secs.

There's also Focus Peaking, an electronic shutter with a maximum shutter speed of 1/32000sec, film simulation modes, Eye Detection AF, 1080p video recording, an Auto Macro mode, variable aspect

ratios (3:2, 16:9, 1:1), a built-in intervalometer, and Wi-Fi.

It's available to purchase now in Black or Silver variations. The X-T10 is priced at £499 body-only, £599 with the XC16-50mm lens or £799 with the XF18-55mm optic.

> www.fujifilm.eu.uk





DSLR LENSES

Nifty fifty from Canon

A 50mm prime with a fixed focal length used to be the standard issue kit lens before zooms came of age in the 1980s, and they're just as relevant today. Canon's new model is the successor to the EF 50mm f/1.8 II, and it retains its fast maximum aperture. This is perfect for shallow depth-of-field shots with diffused, blurry backgrounds, and the EF 50mm f/1.8 STM features a stepping motor said to give fast, near-silent focusing. The diaphragm features seven blades to provide attractive bokeh effects on out-of-focus highlights, and Canon's Super Spectra Coating is employed to suppress ghosting and flare. At 160g it weighs little more than a smartphone, and the compact dimensions of 69.2x39.3mm won't take up much room in your kit bag. The EF lens is compatible with full-frame and APS-C Canon DSLRs, but you'll have a film-equivalent of 80mm when attached to the latter. The Canon EF 50mm f/1.8 STM is available now, priced at £129.99. www.canon.co.uk

BACKPACKS

Nest debut Falconer bags

Bag manufacturer Nest has released a new range of rucksacks to carry large amounts of camera gear. The Falconer range consists of the EB600 and the larger EB800, and Nest suggests they are suitable for wildlife and sports photographers thanks to their ability to carry long lenses up to 600mm. Both bags come in an all-black colour scheme, boast YKK zips and feature water-resistant exterior fabric. Comfort is enhanced with 10mm-thick padding to all areas and, as wildlife and sports photographers often have to travel a fair distance to capture images, Nest has included a padded waist strap to stop the bag rocking from side to side. The EB600 costs £129, while the EB800 is priced at £149. \(\rightarrow\) www.nest-style.com



NEWSBYTES

Wide lenses for Olympus CSCs

Olympus expands its Pro line with two wide-angle lenses. The M.Zuiko 7-14mm f/2.8 and 8mm f/1.8 Fisheye have a film equivalent of 14-28mm and 16mm respectively. Both offer weather-sealing and have fast maximum apertures. Available now, the 7-14mm f/2.8 Pro costs £999, and the 8mm f1.8 is £799.

www.olympus.co.uk



NX1 Firmware update

A comprehensive firmware update has been released for Samsung's flagship NX1 CSC. It improves autofocus performance in low light, provides a new Zone AF mode and increases the Time-lapse options to 3000 shots. For the full list of refinements visit:

> www.samsung.com/uk



New Toshiba SDXC cards are large and fast

Toshiba has renewed its highend Exceria Pro SD card range. The 16GB, 32GB and 64GB cards have a maximum read speed of 260MB/s and a write speed of 240MB/s. The 128GB card is the largest of the pack and has a slower maximum write speed of 150MB/s. Pricing

and availability for the cards is yet to be announced.

> www.
toshiba.co.uk



SMARTPHONE SHOOTOUT

SMARTPHONE SHOOTOUT

SMARTPHONE SHOOTOUT

SMARTPHONE SHOOTOUT

SHOOTOUT

Smartphones are the one-stop-shop for apps, phone calls and web browsing, but just how good are

the latest built-in cameras?

TEST BY DAN MOLD

We find out...

APPLE iPHONE 6 16GB £629.99



HERE'S NO DENYING THAT smartphones are smarter than ever before. And there's nothing to suggest this march of progression is going to stop any time soon. Current models have apps to cater for every need, from online banking to satellite navigation, and from multi-track recording to playing Scrabble. Their high definition screens are sharp enough to shave with, and the processing chips are several times more powerful than the ones that put humankind on the moon.

Phones have evolved at a lightning pace over the last decade. Taking on the 'smart' accolade, they've become much more than a phone, so much so that they're seldom used for making calls. Smartphones have become *the* one-stop-shop for apps, internet, communication and recording images – it's all under one roof. The World Wide Web is quite literally in the palm of your hand.

Even in the past few years, phones have become smaller and thinner, with Apple alone shaving off 0.7mm from its iPhone 5s to the iPhone 6. Needless to say, there's not a huge amount of space for a camera sensor or lens, and this means manufacturers have to think smart to fit it all in. Compact cameras and Compact System Cameras are at it too, and while they're getting smaller, they're still an additional device to carry, and simply cannot compete with the portability of a smartphone which slips into a pocket and is always with you. So if you leave the house without your main camera, you'll always have your phone's camera, should a photo opportunity present itself.

The beauty of smartphones is their wireless functionality. You can take a shot on location, use an app to edit key parameters such as saturation and sharpness, and with minimal fuss, upload it to the world. That shoot and share functionality is something you don't get with a regular DSLR.

Sceptics are quite to quick to jump on the image quality of cameraphones. But you need to bear in mind that you're unlikely to need an image larger than A4 for printing or uploading to social media.

Here, we've rounded up four of the best phones on the market, so read on to discover which gives the best pictures.

How we did the test

We put all four of the smartphones through an identical series of tests to rate their performance and image quality. We inspected the JPEGs for image detail and digital Noise, plus the default camera apps built into each model and their ease of use. Finally, we weighed it all up against their price point to see which offered the best value for money.









WHAT TO LOOK FOR

IMAGE STABILISATION

Tripods are seldom used with smartphones, so optical Image Stabilisation can help users get sharp shots when handholding. These special optics have floating elements which correct for vibrations caused by hand movement.

VIDEO RECORDING

Smartphones shoot video footage as well as still images, and most premium models record Blu-ray quality, Full HD movies at a resolution of 1080x1920 pixels.





RAW SHOOTING

All camera phones shoot JPEGs. This is fine for uploading to social media straight from the device. But if you want to process your images back at your computer then a phone that can shoot RAW is an invaluable asset. It gives you much more data to fine-tune the shot.

AVAILABLE APPS

We looked at the default camera apps of each smartphone, but you can download a plethora of alternatives, including photo apps from Apple's App Store or Android's Play Store.

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APPLE iPHONE 6 16GB £629.99

HE iPHONE 6 AND 6 PLUS ARE the latest models from Apple. Both boast a brand new imaging sensor which supports Focus Pixels, and this is said to speed up the autofocus. The larger, 6 Plus model also comes with Optical Image Stabilisation, however we used the more affordable iPhone 6 to see how it stacked up against the competition.

It's available in 16GB, 64GB and 128GB capacities, with the base model starting at £629.99. All come with Apple's latest iOS 8 operating system which is both fast and responsive. The built-in camera app was by far the most intuitive on test. You can swipe left or right to cycle through the modes: Time-lapse, Slo-mo, Video, Photo, Square and Pano. In the standard Photo mode there are nine effects to choose, with Mono, Noir and Chrome to name but a few. Although user friendly, the app didn't give much scope for manual camera settings. You're very much locked into an Auto mode, and the main settings you can turn on or off include the built-in Flash, HDR mode and Self-timer.

The iPhone's main camera yields the lowest resolution on test at just 8Mp. But, it's worth

noting that 8Mp is more than enough for sharing online, and with more room for the pixels to breathe, it performed well in low light conditions. There's a fast, f/2.2 maximum aperture on both the front and rear cameras, but the resolution drops to 1.2Mp when using the secondary camera to shoot self-portraits.

The iPhone 6 was quite slow to focus, taking around 2secs to find our subject. But it made up for it with its nippy frame rate and fast file dispatch times which were instant.

The iPhone 6 is the thinnest model on test. It made Panasonic's camera-sized CM1 feel very chunky in comparison, as it measured a sleek 6.9mm from front to back. The 4.7in screen was large and clear with a resolution of 1,000.5k-dot.

PRONTHE RATINGS

Features and build Performance Image Quality Value for money Overall verdict 0000



PANASONIC CM1 16GB £799

HE CM1 IS A HYBRID OF PHONE and camera. It feels more like a compact with a phone feature rather than the other way around, but is that a good thing? Well, priced at £799, you certainly pay for the privilege of this unique camera phone. For your outlay, you're rewarded with the largest sensor on test. It's the same 20Mp lin type used in Panasonic's FZ1000 bridge camera and shares its Ultra HD, 4K movie capability. Pics can be shot in JPEG or RAW format as large as 5472x3648px.

The focal length of the main camera is a fixed 28mm with an aperture that can open as wide as f/2.8. The CM1 comes with the 4.4.4 KitKat Android Operating System. It's powered by a Snapdragon 2.3GHz Quad-core processor and Panasonic's Venus engine. Composing and reviewing images with the 4.7in display was a joy as it has a hugely detailed resolution of 6,220k-dot.

The CM1 comes exclusively with 16GB of storage, but this can be expanded by up to an additional 128GB using a microSD card.

It's the largest phone on test, partially thanks to its big front element which protrudes from the body, giving the GM1 a depth of over 2cm. The lens is surrounded by a ring which can be used to digitally zoom or set exposure settings. It did however feel that a trick has been missed with the omission of an optical zoom.

On the side you'll find a camera switch which can be used to quickly bring up the Camera app. The built-in app felt a little cluttered, but it displayed all the info you need and allowed the highest level of control, with full Manual, Aperture priority and Shutter priority modes.

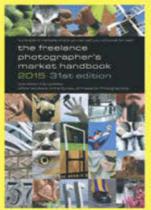
A JPEG burst was very speedy and took just a moment to write, while we could fire off three RAWs before the camera slowed and these took 1sec to write to memory. The autofocus also impressed and was the joint fastest on test with Samsung's S6.

PRONTHE RATINGS

Features and build Performance Image Quality Value for money Overall verdict



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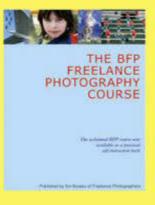
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The new Nissin i40 mini flash.

Introducing Nissin's new pocket size flashgun, the i40. Weighing in at just 203g and measuring only 85mm high, this high specification flash is ideal for travelling.

Although compact, the i40 packs a real punch with a guide number of GN40 at ISO100. It boasts an auto zoom range of 24 – 105mm (16mm with built in diffuser) and supports up to 1/8000th second shutter speed. Other features include LED video light function, Wireless TTL and a bounce and swivel head - all wrapped up in a stylish design with easy to use intuitive controls.

The i40 is available in Canon, Nikon, Sony, Four Thirds and Fuji fit.

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SAMSUNG S6 EDGE 32GB £588

EEN TO STAND OUT FROM THE smartphone crowd is the S6 Edge from Samsung. The S6 earns its
Edge prestige with its quirky curved Super AMOLED display. It's the largest screen on test at 5.1in and is made from Corning's toughest glass yet – Gorilla Glass 4.
Although we looked at the S6 Edge, much of this review will apply to the standard S6 too which shares a good deal of the spec sheet. It's available in 32GB, 64GB or 128GB with the base model starting at £588.

With dimensions of 142x70.1x7mm, the S6 Edge is the tallest phone we assessed, but it has a slender demeanour. Its curved screen looks fantastic and at 3,686.4k-dots it's pleasantly sharp – around 3.7x greater than Apple's iPhone 6 and Sony's Z3 Compact. But, the curved sides give little purchase for your hands to grip on to, so takes a little getting used to.

The rear-facing camera has a 16Mp CMOS chip capable of capturing JPEG stills as large as 5312x2988px. It has the widest maximum aperture on test. Opening up to f/1.9 the S6 Edge is well-set for low light conditions. The front-facing camera boasts the largest

resolution on test too. At 5Mp you can take detailed 'selfies' with a maximum resolution of 2592x1944px.

3GB of RAM has been employed to run the latest Android Lollipop operating system. The default Camera app was very intuitive in use. Moving away from the Auto mode, you can put the camera into the Pro setting for more control over ISO and metering. But, this was simply an advanced auto mode, with no access to Shutter speed or Aperture.

The S6 had some modes which provided hours of fun, including Slow motion capture and Virtual Shot.

The Edge impressed with a rapid burst mode and shared the joint-fastest focusing speed with Panasonic's CM1 so it gets top marks for performance.

PRWTHE RATINGS

Features and build Performance Image Quality Value for money Overall verdict



SONY XPERIA Z3 COMPACT 16GB £360

HE FULLY WEATHER-SEALED Sony Xperia Z3 Compact comes with 16GB of internal storage. But, if you need additional memory, there's a microSD card slot on the side which takes up to an additional 128GB.

As its name suggests, the Z3 Compact is one of the most pocketable phones we tested. It's not as thin as the iPhone, but it beat all comers for height and width with its dimensions of 64.9x127x8.6mm. One element of the Z3 that's certainly not compact is the sensor as the main camera boasts a 1/2.3in sensor with 20.7Mp to play with. It produces the largest files on test, capturing images at 5248x3936px. Video can also be captured in 4K at 3840x2160 or Full HD at 1920x1080px. Switch to the secondary camera on the front and you have 2.2Mp for capturing self-portraits.

Tasked with processing the images and apps is a Snapdragon Quad-core 2.5GHz processor. There's also an additional Adreno 330GPU (Graphics Processing Unit) for rendering images, movies and games. The Z3 Compact comes with 2GB of RAM to run Android's 5.0 Lollipop Operating System.

The default Camera app provided all the information you need, and there's a Manual mode for times when you want to control the ISO and metering. Although aperture and shutter speed could only be determined by the phone, you can add up to two stops of Exposure Compensation, set the White Balance and control the built-in flash.

While it's packed with great photo potential, the 921.6k-dot screen just couldn't do our shots justice, and they didn't look as clean as those from the Samsung S6 Edge or Panasonic CM1.

We found the Z3 Compact's AF performance was a little quicker off the mark than Apple's iPhone 6, but it was disappointingly slow to save shots, possibly due to the large, 20.7Mp resolution.

THE RATINGS

Features and build Performance Image Quality Value for money Overall verdict



IMAGE QUALITY

We tested the lens sharpness and ISO performance of each camera phone under identical lighting conditions. Take a look at the results below to see how each fared...



APPLE iPHONE 6

The iPhone 6's sensor and lens combination was impressive. In terms of metering the iPhone 6 was bright and free of digital Noise in sunny conditions – probably due to its lower megapixel count. Details were slightly waxy in comparison to Panasonic's CM1, but this wouldn't be obvious if you only want to upload shots to social media. Sharpness was good across the frame from centre to corners.









PANASONIC CM1

The CM1's sharpness was impressive across the frame and its ISO performance was also very good. Its large lin sensor was able to render very clean images and made it easy to blur the background with a pleasing bokeh. Its JPEGs looked a little flat in comparison to other models, but its RAW capability made up for this – it's great if you want to edit your shots in a serious way back at a computer.

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SAMSUNG S6 EDGE

Samsung's S6 Edge boasts a healthy 16Mp and image sharpness was very impressive. Its bright, saturated JPEGs were ready to upload straight away thanks to in-camera sharpening and colour adjustments. We did note a tiny amount of chromatic aberration in the corners but this was only apparent when zooming in closely. For everyday shots and social media use, it's nothing to worry about.

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SONY Z3 COMPACT

The Z3 Compact has the largest resolution on test at 20.7Mp. Our test charts revealed a lot of in-camera sharpening. This meant that although the corners and centre of the pic were sharp enough, results were slightly compromised by a white halo on fine edges. When inspecting the ISO performance, the images from the Z3 Compact appeared less clean than the other cameras on the test bench.

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SMARTPHONE COMPARISON CHART















| | iPHONE 6 16GB | PANASONIC CM1 16GB | SAMSUNG S6 EDGE 32GB | SONY XPERIA Z3 COMPACT |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| PRICE | £629.99 | £799 | £588 | £360 |
| OPERATING SYSTEM | iOS 8 | Android 4.4.4 KitKat | Android 5.0 Lollipop | Android 5.0 Lollipop |
| MAIN CAMERA RESOLUTION | 8Мр | 20Mp | 16Mp | 20.7Mp |
| OPTICAL STABILISATION | No | No | No | No |
| VIDEO (MAX RESOLUTION) | Full HD (1080x1920) | Full HD, UHD 4K (3840x2160) | Full HD, UHD 4K (3840x2160) | Full HD, UHD 4K (3840x2160) |
| BATTERY TALK TIME | 14 hours | 12 hours | 18 hours | 14 hours |
| SCREEN | 4.7in 1,000.5k-dot | 4.7in 6,220k-dot | 5.1in 3,686.4k-dot super AMOLED | 4.6in 921k-dot |
| RAM | 1GB | 2GB | 3GB | 2GB |
| RAW CAPABILITY | No | Yes | No | No |
| EXPANDABLE MEMORY | No | Yes (microSD up to 128GB) | No | Yes (microSD up to 128GB) |
| WEIGHT | 129g | 203g | 132g | 129g |
| DIMENSIONS | 67x138.1x6.9mm | 68x135.4x21.1mm | 70.1x142x7mm | 64.9x127x8.6mm |
| VISIT | www.apple.com/uk | www.panasonic.com/uk | www.samsung.com/uk | www.sonymobile.com |
| FEATURES & BUILD | 00000 | 0000 | 00000 | ೦೦೦ |
| PERFORMANCE | 00000 | 00000 | 00000 | ೦೦೦ |
| MAGE QUALITY | 00000 | 00000 | 00000 | ೦೦೦ |
| VALUE FOR MONEY | 0000≎ | 0000 | 00003 | 0000 |
| OVERALL VERDICT | 00000 | 00000 | 00000 | ೦೦೦ ೦ |

THE VERDICT

T WAS FASCINATING TO STUDY THE IMAGE QUALITY from the smart devices that many of us carry every day. Sony's Xperia X3 Compact is a great smartphone if you're on a tighter budget. Its Android 5.0 Lollipop operating system is slick and easy to use, it's light and portable and is waterproof to 1.5m. But, stopping it from reaching the top spot was its image quality which looked over-sharpened, a lack of manual camera control and its rather slow JPEG write times.

Apple's iPhone 6 was a strong contender. It came close to pole position with its intuitive built-in Camera app, blisteringly fast burst mode and write times. In addition, it both looks great and feels great to use. However, its image quality couldn't keep pace with our winner and the price is quite steep with the 16GB base model starting at £629.99. For many though, the outlay is worth it for the ultra slick iOS interface.

Panasonic's unique CM1 came a close second in this test. Integrating a phone into a compact camera, rather than the reverse, it gave a strong performance with a fast burst mode and write times, 4K video capture and good image quality with RAW capability. But, it was rather chunky, and while we could easily slip one of its rivals into a pocket and hardly notice it was there, we were slightly hesitant to pocket the CM1 due to its bulky dimensions. For its large size we'd have liked to have been rewarded with an optical zoom, but this wasn't part of the build.

WINNER

SAMSUNG S6 EDGE

It wasn't just the 'edgy' display that grabbed our attention this month. The nippy autofocusing and fast write times of the S6 made it a pleasure to shoot with. The built-in camera app doesn't offer a huge amount of manual control, but its Auto and Pro modes did a fantastic job at capturing striking handheld shots. Samsung's base model isn't cheap at £588, but it does come with more memory than its competitors. If you're in the market for a new phone and want to be able to take good quality stills, the S6 and S6 Edge earn a well-deserved award.



CANON EOS M3 / ENTHUSIAST CSC / £599 WITH 18-55MM LENS

POWER & PORTABILITY

With a spec sheet big on megapixels and small in size, can Canon's latest EOS M3 catch the CSC competition?

TEST BY MATTY GRAHAM

ANON WAS LATE TO the CSC party, launching the original EOS M in 2012 and following up with the (Japan-only) EOS M2 in 2013. So, for UK shooters, the EOS M3 is the true successor to the original and is competing in a busy sector, occupied by many other brands. As three years have elapsed between the launch of the M and M3, users are entitled to expect new features, and Canon hasn't disappointed. The pixel count has grown from 18 to 24.2Mp - an amount on a par with some

DSLRs. A new-shape body and quicker AF enhances the M3's appeal, but will this be enough to tempt buyers away from more established CSC systems?

Features & Build

With its 24.2 megapixels, the M3 has made a big leap forward in terms of image resolution and dealt a blow in terms of pixel count to Micro Four-Thirds CSCs such as the Olympus OM-D range and Fuji's X-series cameras, which all offer around 16Mp. Perhaps the M3's biggest rival is

the Sony A6000, which also has a APS-C size sensor and similar pixel count (24.3Mp). Supporting the sensor is Canon's DIGIC 6 processor, which can also be found in the EOS 750/760D DSLRs and – albeit with dual processors – the acclaimed EOS 7D MkII. So, it boasts a great pedigree, and the new features continue with the addition of both NFC and Wi-Fi to allow for images to be paired to a smart device and uploaded in the field.

Simply looking at the M3 will tell you there's been some big

dynamic range available from the EOS M3 is impressive.

Our test images included scenes shot into the sun and when edited, a huge amount of highlight detail was

recoverable. The 18-55mm kit lens gave its best results at the longer end of its focal length and at mid-range

apertures, from f/8 to f/11.

changes to the body design, and this is where the most useful new features come to light. The body is thicker and gains a pronounced grip to make holding the camera a more comfortable experience. The touchscreen LCD is tiltable, replacing the original M's fixed screen, and is designed to make awkward compositions a thing of the past. It can even be tilted 180° upwards to capture self-portraits. While the body is bigger, it's still pocket-sized compared to DSLRs and larger CSCs, so doesn't lose any of its portability. What's more, the bigger body has allowed for the inclusion of a built-in flash. This extends the low-light shooting possibilities, and a new control dial makes changing exposure settings much easier.

One missing feature that's sure to divide opinion is the lack of a dedicated viewfinder. The Sony A6000 includes an EVF, but EOS M3 users will need to buy the optional EVF, which is available in a pricier kit bundle (it's £699 with the added EVF accessory, or £599 without).

Additional internal features include an option to expand the upper end of the ISO range from 12,800 to 25,600 and, as autofocus speed was a general gripe from original M users, there's a 49-point Hybrid CMOS AF III system that Canon claims is six times faster in operation than the AF featured on the original EOS M.

The body sports a pronounced grip, making it comfortable to hold





Key features of the Canon EOS M3

BUILT-IN FLASH

With a modest Guide Number of 5 (ISO 100), the pop-up flash offers the option of fill-in illumination. The sync speed is 1/200sec.



LENS

The EOS M3 comes with a 18-55mm image stabilised kit lens, which offers a film-equivalent focal length range of 28-88mm.

BIG PIXEL COUNT

Offering an 24.2Mp APS-C sensor and a DIGIC 6 processor, the EOS M3 is well placed to deliver high-quality images that combat high ISO Noise.



TOUCHSCREEN LCD

The vibrant 3in 1,040K-dot LCD is touch-sensitive, offers 100% coverage and has five levels of brightness. Focus can be selected quickly by tapping an area of the screen.

Quickspec

Street price: £599 with 18-55mm

f/4-5.6 IS STM lens

Resolution: 24.2Mp (6000x4000px)

Format: RAW (CR2) & JPEG Sensor: APS-C CMOS (23.3x14.9) ISO: 100-12,800 (25,600 expanded)

Shutter: 30-1/6000sec & Bulb **AF system:** Hybrid CMOS II AF system with 49 AF points

Focusing modes: Auto (AF-A), Continuous (AF-C), Single (AF-S),

and Manual focus (MF)

Metering: Evaluative, Partial, Centre

Weighted and Spot **Burst rate:** 4.2fps

Monitor: 3in 1,040k-dot tiltable

touchscreen LCD

Viewfinder: EVF at extra cost Pop-up flash: Yes Hotshoe: Yes Video: Full HD @ 30/25/24fps

Write speeds: 1.4secs RAW, 0.8sec

Extra Fine JPEG

Storage: SD, SDHC and SDXC
Weight: 369g (body, battery, card)

Dimensions: (WxHxD) 110.9x68x44.5mm **Visit:** www.canon.co.uk

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Performance & Handling

The menu system is logical to navigate and easy to use. It will be instantly familiar to anyone that has used a Canon DSLR model. Even if you are a complete newcomer, it won't take long to find your way around the various controls, so if you want a camera that you can pick up and start shooting with immediately, the M3 definitely ticks this box. The reshaped body makes the M3 comfortable to hold for long periods of time, and at 366g, the body is actually 30g lighter than the Olympus E-M10 (battery and memory card included).

That said, the image-stabilised 18-55mm lens is fairly weighty at 210g, but this isn't enough to unbalance the camera.

The touchscreen LCD is both versatile and easy to use. Adjustments can be made quickly without having to go into endless sub-menus and, although we've seen it before, the ability to line up a scene and then tap the screen to select the point of focus and trigger the shutter speeds up operation no end. The clever screen also comes into its own after capture. Using it in the same manner as the screen on a smartphone, you can swipe to scroll through images or pinch to zoom in and magnify your shot.

The hybrid AF system has certainly improved autofocus, but it can't be described as bulletproof. Scenes in low-light conditions occasionally caused the focusing to hunt, but in decent light with higher contrast we didn't experience any problems. A feature that isn't so quick is the maximum burst rate, which has actually dipped from 4.3 to 4.2 frames per second. Write speeds are average too, with RAW files taking 1.4 secs to write and JPEGs just under 1sec.



The EOS M3's LCD flips up 180° allowing for self-portraits to be easily composed.



Image quality ISO, JPEG & RAW image test results

Sporting Canon's latest DIGIC 6 processor, the M3 is well placed to combat digital noise. From our ISO test images, Noise isn't apparent until the ISO 800 mark for JPEGs and around ISO 1000 for RAW files. Even at ISO 3200, images are still quite usable and could be printed at A4 size. Detail became compromised at ISO 6400 and this was very obvious by ISO 12800. The expanded ISO level of 25600 is handy for low-light emergencies but images suffer from a higher levels of Noise.









One exposure mode worth a mention is the Creative Assist option. Allowing users to quickly tweak contrast, saturation and even depth-of-field settings produces Instagram-style filters that bring an arty feel to images with the minimum of effort. Although many of these effects can be added in post-processing software, photographers looking to capture a particular style can do it in-camera.

As the M3 boasts a hotshoe mount, the CSC can be used with Canon or third-party flashguns, although the compact 270 EXII unit would balance better on the small body than the heavier 430EXII or 580EXII units. If you do try shooting in the studio, full Manual mode is easy to set up, with the front command dial adjusting shutter speed and the real control wheel adjusting aperture. A dedicated Record button allows for video footage to be captured using any exposure mode (including the trendy Creative Assist), although there is also a separate Movie setting on the Mode dial that controls shutter speed and aperture automatically.

The touchscreen is versatile and easy to use, and adjustments can be made quickly without having to go into sub-menus

Value for Money

Priced at £599 with an 18-55mm lens, the M3 is also available in other bundles including a twin lens kit for £968 that adds the wide-angle 11-22mm f/4-5.6 IS STM optic. Although it is sensibly priced, the Sony A6000 can be found for around £50 less, while the all-weather Nikon AW1 is

pitched at the same price and can be used underwater.

For existing Canon users, the inclusion of the EF adaptor that allows DSLR lenses to be used would have enhanced the value. This has to be bought separately for £99 - although a search may find second-hand options at a lower price.

THE VERDICT

Because the ageing EOS M is nearly three years old, the arrival of the EOS M3 needed to deliver a knockout blow. While the handling and ease of use are certainly there, the autofocus, while much improved, could still be faster. Overall image quality is decent too, but those with ultra-critical eyes would be looking for a little more detail. The M3 is definitely a massive improvement over the original M and offers stacks of useful features that make a real difference out in the field. While it's not a 'bargain', it is reasonably priced, but if you're a Canon DSLR user it makes sense to buy the EF lens adaptor and integrate this camera into your existing system.

If you have no brand allegiance and want a speedy burst rate. other cameras may provide a better fit for your shooting style. So, no knockout blow, but this model certainly makes Canon part of the serious CSC party.

Features & build **Performance** Image quality Value for money **Overall score**

0000 SAMSUNG NX500 / ENTRY LEVEL CSC / £599 WITH 16-50MM LENS

THE NEXT GENERATION

Samsung's latest NX offers the spec of an enthusiast DSLR in a temptingly portable package

TEST BY DAN MOLD

S THE NAME suggests,
Compact System
Cameras are designed
to be small and portable.
However, this often means that
some specs, including sensor
size and functionality, are
compromised. Samsung's
NX500 looks to buck this trend,
because it boasts an impressive
list of features that outdoes
many enthusiast DSLRs yet

retains a compact body. The NX500 inherits a good deal from its larger, DSLR-sized sibling – the NX1, including a large APS-C sensor, 4K video recording and 3in 1036k-dot display. This comprehensive set of features has been squeezed into a slender body, around 40% shallower and 35% shorter than a Nikon D5500 DSLR. So is the smart money on the NX500? Let's find out.

Features & Build

There's no better place to start than with the NX500's large BSI CMOS sensor. Its APS-C chip is the same size as those in entry-level DSLRs, but its resolution of 28.2Mp (borrowed from the NX1) is the highest on the market. With pixels so plentiful, JPEG and RAW images can be shot as large as 6480x4320px.

Another feature inherited from its bigger brother is the DRIMe Vs processor. It's the most powerful processor Samsung make, and although its maximum frame rate can't match the 15fps in the NX1, its 9fps burst is blisteringly quick and faster than all DSLRs at the same price. Impressive!

The Electronic Viewfinder (EVF) found on the NX1 has been left off the bill to give the NX500 more slender dimensions.

Measuring 119.5x63.6x42.5mm it has a portability that's unmatched by DSLRs.

On top you'll find a dedicated Mobile button for activating the Wi-Fi, a shutter button with integrated power switch, an AEL button and a Mode dial with MASP modes. There's also a hotshoe for flashguns and accessories. Although no pop-up flash is built in, the NX500 comes bundled with a portable SEF8A flashgun for the times when you require extra illumination.

One of two Command dials sit on the top-plate, with the other taking its place on the rear of the camera above the D-Pad. Here, you'll also find the 3in 1036k-dot Super AMOLED touchscreen display. The monitor flips up by 180° and down by 45° to assist with awkward shooting angles – a great addition to have.

The NX500 comes bundled with an 16-50mm OIS Power Zoom f/3.5-5.6 lens. To zoom you can use the ring at the front or the + and - buttons on the left side, although when in the Manual Focus mode the front ring is used to focus. There's also an iFn button which provides access to exposure adjustments including Aperture, ISO and White Balance.

In addition to Full HD 1080p recording, 4K video can be shot at 4096x2160 24p, but you'll need an SD card which bears the U3 (UHS 3) symbol to ensure a constant frame rate. When shooting 4K there's a 1.68x crop applied, giving the 16-50mm lens

The NX500's 9fps burst rate is rapid and faster than all DSLRs at the same price-point



100% DETAIL

Image quality Detail & lens

We aimed the NX500 at our lens test chart to reveal any optical defects. With the focal length set to its widest 16mm, the maximum f/3.5 aperture gave a good central sharpness but corners were soft. These sharpened as the aperture closed, not becoming truly sharp until f/11. There were signs that barrel distortion had been corrected for in the JPEGs, but this was completely ironed out at the long end. At 50mm, sharpness was good across the frame although corners remained slightly soft through the aperture range here. We didn't note any chromatic aberration throughout.



3IN 1036K-DOT VARI-ANGLE TOUCHSCREEN

TWIN COMMAND DIALS

Shutter speed and ISO values.

This is a premium feature that gives you quick

access to core camera settings - Aperture,

The hi-res monitor flips up by 180° and down by 45° to make composing at awkward angles an easy task. As it's a touch display, you can tap to focus and swipe through the images you've taken.

Burst rate: 9fps

1

Monitor: 3in, 1,036k dot Super AMOLED touchscreen

Pop-up flash: No Hotshoe: Yes Video: 4K 2160p, Full HD 1080p

Write speeds: 0.8secs RAW, 0.5sec Large Fine JPEG

Storage: SD, SDHC and SDXC Weight: 292g (body only) Dimensions: (WxHxD) 119.5x63.6x42.5mm

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the film-equivalent range of a 27-84mm. The benefits of 4K shooting aren't limited to UHD video clips, as you can extract high quality, 8Mp stills from the footage to get the exact moment you want.

Performance & Handling

Although much smaller than its DSLR-sized sibling, the NX500 is reasonably large for a mirrorless system camera. It's not as pocketable as Samsung's NX Mini, Nikon's 1 J5 or Canon's EOS M III, but its large, contoured grip is a welcome addition, giving a secure feel when handholding.

The NX500 features an NX AF System III which was blisteringly fast and very impressive in bright lighting. It was a little slower in low light, but the AF assist lamp helped it to focus in these situations. The AF system offers an impressive 205 Phase Detection and 209 Contrast points. The 16-50mm lens has an electronic zoom which takes a little getting used to as it doesn't have the immediacy of a manually-operated, geared lens. For sharper shots at slower shutter speeds, the lens features an Optical Image Stabiliser.

Compared to a DSLR, the buttons and Command dials feel quite miniature and are a little hard to use if you have large hands. That said, the twin Command dials are most welcome and made on-the-fly exposure adjustments easy.

There's a chunky Mode dial on top which sits flush with the top plate. This granted fast access to the MASP exposure modes.

In addition, you don't need to use the buttons too often as the majority of the settings can be



The NX500 boasts 4K video recording and has a hotshoe for flash peripherals. An external SEF8A flashgun comes in the box.



Image quality ISO, JPEG & RAW image test results

Details were strong at ISO 100 in the JPEGs but this softened dramatically by ISO 400. Noise was suppressed well due to in-camera processing but this meant that sharp details looked a little waxy. Although images taken at ISO 400 and 800 were a little soft, they were still usable, and you could only really see a loss of detail when zooming in to 100%. We only stepped over the ISO 1600 mark as a last resort as digital Noise was much more visible here, and detail was compromised.









accessed and set using the bright and responsive touchscreen display. We enjoyed tapping to focus and swiping through our images, and rarely were we stuck to find the settings we were after. The display also flips up and down for shooting above head height or low to the ground. It's sharp too, with a resolution of 1,036k-dots.

The kit lens retracts to give the lens and camera a manageable thickness of just 7cm, so it takes up hardly any space in a camera bag. It's quick to turn the NX500 on as the power switch is integrated around the shutter, but it took a disappointing 5secs to initialise and be ready to take a shot from a cold start.

The DRIMe Vs image processor gives the option of an impressive 9fps burst mode. A single JPEG was cleared in 0.4 sec, while a RAW took 0.8sec to write to our test card. The buffer was unfazed by a JPEG burst. There's the option to drop the resolution down to 7Mp and shoot at 30fps, and it could fire off 30 frames before stopping. The RAW burst was slightly disappointing in comparison as it halted after seven

The NX500's twin command dials are most welcome and made on-the-fly exposure adjustments easy

shots. It then took 1.54 secs to clear the buffer and write them.

Value for Money

Priced at £599, the NX500 beats its all of its DSLR competition in the same price range with a higher resolution, faster burst rate and 4K video recording. It undercuts Nikon's £636 D5500 and Canon's

£689 750D, comes fully Wi-Fiequipped and easily fits into a bag. There's not much to dislike - the NX500 offers everything an enthusiast photographer needs.

Staying within the CSC market, Sony's A6000 is a similar size, and costs less at £510. It has a slightly smaller 24.3Mp sensor, but boasts a higher 11fps burst mode.

Pion THE VERDICT

There are so many cameras on the market that it can be a real headache when it comes to choosing the right one for you. If you're considering a new camera, the choice of whether you go for Samsung's NX500 is simple. If you want all the functionality and the image quality of an entry-level DSLR but want it in a more portable package, then it doesn't go far wrong. Its seven shot RAW burst was a little disappointing and its diminutive size took a little getting used to, but its rapid AF performance and large APS-C chip more than made up for this. If you're upgrading from a compact, the NX500 will feel like a natural progression. But, if

you're looking for a portable alternative to your DSLR, you may find yourself missing its creature comforts.

All-told though, the NX500 offers extraordinarily good value. Features & build **Performance** Image quality Value for money OOOOO Overall score

00000



LIGHTROOM CC



Have Adobe Lightroom's advanced RAW editing features made it more than a photo organisation tool? We take a look at the latest release to find out

TEST BY ANDY HEATHER

T USED TO BE THE case that Lightroom was considered useful primarily for image organisation and RAW workflow. However, its image-editing capabilities have come such a long way that for many photographers, it now acts as a replacement for Photoshop for an increasing number of imaging tasks.

Two versions available

Lightroom CC is available through Adobe's Creative Cloud subscription service, the least expensive of which – the Creative Cloud Photography Plan – costs £8.57 per month and includes Photoshop CC and Lightroom CC. For those who'd rather not subscribe, Adobe also offers a standalone version, called Lightroom 6, for a one-off price of £103.88, and an upgrade (from any previous version) costing £59.09.

Edit on the move

The standalone version of Lightroom doesn't include any Creative Cloud features such as synchronization with Lightroom Mobile, which is one of Lightroom CC's finest features. Lightroom Mobile is a free app for iOS and Android. Once you've signed in, any collections that you choose to sync will appear on your tablet or smartphone as a proxy file. These smaller files (Adobe calls them Smart Previews) are quicker to sync over the air than a full-sized RAW. Any edits you make to them are automatically synced and applied to the full RAW file on your home computer.

GPU-related enhancements

One of the biggest additions to the new Lightroom is GPU acceleration. Lightroom now takes advantage of compatible graphics processors when processing and previewing images, providing a boost to the program's speed. We found the update to be particularly noticeable in the Develop module, which feels far more responsive. Adjustment Brush and Graduated Filter adjustments were noticeably snappier than they were in Lightroom 5, although your mileage may vary. To take advantage of the new enhancements, you'll need a graphics card that's compatible

Quickspec

Street Price: £8.57 per month or £103.88 standalone

Free trial available: Yes (30 days)
Min System requirements

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Both: 2GB of RAM (8 GB recommended), 2GB of available hard-disk space, 1GB of Video RAM, Open GL 3.3 and DirectX 10-capable video card for GPU-related functionality, Internet connection required for activation and content download

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with OpenGL 3.3, which includes most cards made in the last two years.

Merge to Panorama

Also new to Lightroom is a tool which allows you to select several images in your library and automatically merge them into a panorama shot. Lightroom offers three types of panorama stitching method and previewing each is quick and snappy, even for very large files. There's also an Auto Crop feature that'll remove any transparent pixels, leaving you a tidy and finished-looking image with the minimum of effort. Even better, the Merge to Panorama tool creates a new RAW file in DNG format. This means you don't have to apply the same adjustments to each exposure before you merge them. Instead, you can approach your merged panorama as you would a fresh RAW file straight from the camera, making localised adjustments as the scene dictates. These files can easily be over 30,000 pixels in

New feature: Merge to HDR



The new Merge to HDR feature makes it easy to take bracketed shots, or virtual copies, and merge them to a DNG file with a large dynamic range.

The Merge to Panorama tool creates a new RAW file in DNG format

width and supremely detailed, but Lightroom still handled them fairly quickly. By contrast, in-camera panorama shots are usually saved as JPEGs, meaning they don't have nearly as much data in the shadows and highlights and leave far less scope for post processing.

Merge to HDR

Inside the Merge menu there's also a new HDR option. Just like the panorama tool, this allows you to select several bracketed files in Lightroom and merge them to a DNG file. The file that emerges looks not unlike the initial, balanced exposure, but it contains significantly more data than a standard RAW file, meaning extra detail can be teased from the shadows and highlights. The Exposure slider, which usually goes up to +/- 5 stops is expanded to +/- 10 when editing a merged HDR file. The tool doesn't offer the kind of exaggerated, heightened-reality aesthetic for which HDR is best known, but it's great for expanding dynamic range without losing realism. Best of all, the tool also works on virtual copies of a single RAW file, so you can create a sequence of bracketed shots from one RAW

New feature: Merge to Panorama

Lightroom's Merge to Panorama feature produces a new DNG file, which contains lots of data and allows you to make extensive editing adjustments to your image after merging. Making complex adjustments to images, such as stitching panoramas, creating HDRs, using adjustment brushes or cloning out unwanted elements used to require a detour to Photoshop. However, nowadays all of these can be done right within Lightroom.















and create an HDR image, even if you didn't shoot different exposures at the time.

Filter Brush

Although it was once not possible to make highly-localised adjustments in Lightroom, that's no longer the case thanks to the program's great range of brushes. A new addition is the Filter Brush, which is useful for removing unwanted areas affected by the Radial and Graduated Filter tools.

Value For Money

Lightroom has evolved into a key component in many photographers' workflows and this new version further strengthens its position. For its significantly improved performance and amazing HDR/Panorama features alone, Lightroom 6/CC would be easy to recommend. However, the new Lightroom is a major step up from its predecessor in many other ways as well.

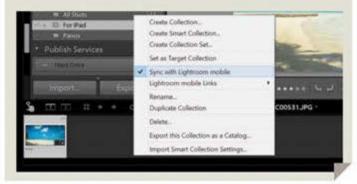
For example, it now has an all-new facial recognition tool that's great for filtering shots of particular people. It also boasts advanced video slideshows and improved web galleries, so it's now better than ever for organising, editing and sharing your shots.

For many photographers, Lightroom CC will now represent an all-in-one organisation and editing solution. Shooters that carry out more complex editing tasks in Photoshop will find their workflows quicker than ever. For owners of previous versions, the upgrade price of £59.09 is tempting, but for our money, the best value is in the form of the Photography Plan subscription. The annual cost of £102.84 is a fraction cheaper than the standalone price of Lightroom 6 and includes Photoshop CC, alongside a set of mobile apps (Lightroom Mobile, Adobe Voice, Photoshop Mix, etc).

These extend the power of the software and provide a professional-level suite of convenient editing tools.

Edit on your tablet or smartphone

Images you import into your Lightroom CC catalogue can be automatically synced with Lightroom Mobile on your smart devices. However, photos in your catalogue aren't synced by default; they must be inside a synced Collection. To sync a Collection, simply right-click it and make sure the Sync with Lightroom mobile option is ticked.



PHONE THE VERDICT

The latest Lightroom has taken a big step forward in terms of its performance and features, meaning your post-processing workflow

will be smoother than ever. The subscription version, Lightroom CC, unlocks the cloud-based features and includes a copy of Photoshop CC, making it a great value package.

Features Interface Performance Value for money Overall score

GADGETS &GIZMOS

We review and rate the latest photography and imaging accessories to hit the shelves

TESTS BY DAN MOLD, ANDY HEATHER & MATTY GRAHAM

PORTABLE TRIPOD / £159

MANFROTTO 190 GO!

Features: Twist-lock legs, weighs 1.7kg, 45cm when closed **Visit:** www.manfrotto.com

HE 190 GO! IS A TRAVEL TRIPOD modelled on the successful Manfrotto 190 range. The 190 Go! shares a price of £159 with the MT190XPRO4, but it's 20% lighter at 1.7kg, and 4cm shorter when collapsed, measuring 45cm. The Quick Power Lock levers which locked the leg sections on the standard 190 have been replaced by twist mechanisms on the 190 Go! These are small enough that all three twist locks on a given leg can be gripped and turned at once, so extending the tripod's leg sections is easy. The twist locks also occupy less space than a lever, meaning the tripod slips easily into carrying pockets and doesn't snag.

There's a handy 90° column mechanism contained inside the tripod's top casting. This

is unlocked by pressing the red button at the base of the centre column. This allows the column to be extended up and then laid flat so you can set up your camera horizontally. This is particularly handy for awkward angles and macro work. The legs can be set at four different angles via a big button at the top of each leg, and the widest angle enables you to shoot at a minimum height of just 7cm. While the twist locks are a great space saver, we found that the time it took to individually lock each leg section was longer than with Manfrotto's standard 190.

Also, the friction of the rubber can make your palms a bit sore with repeated use, so the Quick Power Lock levers on the regular 190 will be preferred by those who prioritise comfort and ease of use over portability.



THE VERDICT The 190 Go! is pleasantly lightweight and portable, making it ideal if you want a compact tripod with pro features. The only compromise is the twist lock legs which slim it down but make setups a tad slower. RATING



UYING NEW OPTICS allows you to open up new creative opportunities, but it needn't be expensive. The Experimental Lens Kit from Lomography enables Micro Four-Thirds users on the tightest of budgets to mix up their lenses. For £59 you get a standard 24mm, a 12mm wide-angle and a 160° fisheye, all sharing an f/8 aperture. Out of the three, the fish-eye is likely to get the most use as it creates images that are quite distinctive and different.

Constructed from plastic, the lens and mounts weigh next to nothing, meaning you can carry all three comfortably in a jacket pocket. However, the compromise is that there is no autofocus – just a manual focus ring. The compromises continue when it comes to depth-of-field and exposure. All the lenses have a fixed aperture of f/8, which means you can't capture shallow depth-offield effects and will need to boost your ISO to achieve a fast-enough shutter speed to avoid camera shake.

Drawbacks aside, the lenses are capable of producing interesting images and will certainly appeal to street photographers looking to travel light and capture quirky pictures with a retro vibe.

THE VERDICT

The affordable price means no autofocus and basic construction, but in the right circumstances, the kit offers a fun, experimental alternative that will help you see and shoot in a creative way.





SLING BAG / £69.95

VANGUARD VEO 37 RAVEL SHOULDER BAG

Features: Made from 600D polyester, weighs 97g, rain cover included Visit: www.vanguardworld.co.uk

HE VEO 37 IS VANGUARD'S

latest slingbag. Designed for Compact System Cameras (CSCs), it features a small padded camera compartment with a handful of dividers. If you prefer, it will take a DSLR with lens attached and an additional short lens. The bag is customisable and the bottom half can be set up with a hard insert to create a cavity for a travel tripod such as the VEO 265CB. It can also be used as storage for a long lens, but care would be needed as the base is quite thin and doesn't offer a huge amount of protection. But, it's a great way to conceal a tripod and keep a low profile. Access is through a zip on the outer wall.

The VEO 37 is transformed into a day bag by removing the camera compartment and hard insert. The strap has been kept simple but it's well padded and comfortable to use all day. A large lip overhangs the side accessory pocket to keep rain out. Here you can store your accessories and there's a dedicated SD card pocket and a rain cover.



THE VERDICT

If you're after a bag that doesn't scream out 'photographer,' the VEO 37 is a good option, though extra padding and an easier way to attach the rain cover would make it even better.





Matty says: Okay, 60 quid for a strap is a luxury purchase, but you can't put a price on comfort - especially if you shoot for hours at a time. This sport version (which I've used for three years) has an additional buckle that secures the strap to your shoulder like a pistol holster.
The extra-snug fit lets you move around faster
- safe in the knowledge that the strap won't slip. | www.blackrapid.com

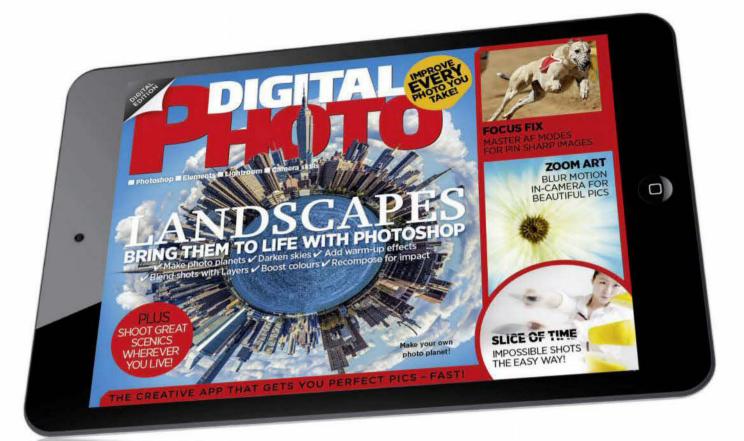


Andy says: Although these lamps are intended for construction work and camping, they're great for photographic purposes too! They're rechargeable, robust and a fantastic way of adding catchlights or filling in shadows. There's a hook on top and powerful mounting magnets so it can be set up in a wide variety of places. Regardless of my subject, I always keep one close by. 🕨 www.amazon.co.uk



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| Colours 3 | 86ml each | £19.99 | 7x5 100 sheets |
| Photo Gl | ossy 200gsm: | | A4 50 sheets |
| | neets +100 FREE | £9.99 | A4 50 sheets |
| A4 20 shee | | £6.99 | A3 50 sheets |
| | Pearl 270gsm | | A3+ 25 sheets |
| Ev4 co -b | ets +50 FREE | | 17" Roll 30 metres |
| | ets +20 FREE | | 24" Roll 30 metres |
| | | | Ultra Pearl 295qs |
| Premium | Gloss 270gsn | 1: | 6x4 100 sheets |
| A4 25 shee | ets OFFER ets OFFER | £8.99 | 7x5 100 sheets |
| A3 25 shee | ets OFFER | £15.99 | A4 25 sheets |
| | eets OFFER | | A3 25 sheets |
| | Pearl 310gsm: | | A3+ 25 sheets |
| 6x4 100 sl | | £14.99 | 13" Roll 10 metres |
| 7x5 100 sl | | £17.99 | 17" Roll 30 metres |
| A4 25 shee | | £12.99 | 24" Roll 30 metres |
| A4 100 sh | | £39.99 | Titanium Lustre 2 |
| A4 250 sh | | £84.99 | A4 25 sheets |
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| A3+ 25 sh | eets | £35.99 | A3 + 25 sheets |
| 17" Roll | 30 metres | £69.99 | |
| 24" Roll | | £96.99 | Oyster 271gsm: |
| Smooth | Gloss 310gsm: | | 6x4 100 sheets |
| 6x4 100 sl | | £14.99 | 7x5 100 sheets |
| 7x5 100 sl | | £17.99 | A4 50 sheets |
| A4 25 shee | | £12.99 | A3 25 sheets |
| A4 100 sh | | £39.99 | A3+ 25 sheets |
| A3 25 shee | | £25.99 | 13" Roll 10 metres |
| A3+ 25 sh | eets | £35.99 | 17" Roll 30 metres |
| Premium | Matt Duo 200 | gsm: | 24" Roll 30 metres |
| A4 50 shee | ets | £12.99 | Gloss 271gsm: |
| A3+ 50 sh | eets | £34.99 | 6x4 100 sheets |
| Heavy D | uo Matt 310gs | m: | 7x5 100 sheets |
| A4 50 shee | | £17.99 | A4 50 sheets |
| A3+ 50 sh | | £44.99 | A3 25 sheets |
| Gold Fib | re Silk 310gsm | | A3+ 25 sheets |
| A4 50 shee | | £37.99 | 13" Roll 10 metres |
| A3+ 50 sh | | £89.99 | 17" Roll 30 metres |
| | no Silk 270gsn | | 24" Roll 30 metres |
| A4 25 she | nte Sitt 270931 | £16 00 | Matt Plus 240gsm |
| A3+ 25 sh | ets | £42.99 | 6x4 100 sheets |
| M3 - 23 SII | CCLS | L-72.33 | 7x5 100 sheets |
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| FU | tospee | ·u | A3 25 sheets |
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| Fetermon | | A4 50 sheets | £13.99 |
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| Fotospeed | | A3 25 sheets | £17.99 |
| | | A3+ 25 sheets | £22.99 |
| Smooth Pearl 290gsm: | | 13" Roll 10 metres | £24.99 |
| 6x4 100 sheets | £12.99 | 17" Roll 30 metres | £42.99 |
| 7x5 100 sheets | £16.99 | 24" Roll 30 metres | £58.99 |
| A4 50 sheets | £17.99 | Matt Proofing 160gsm: | |
| A3 50 sheets | £34.99 | A4 150 sheets | £18.99 |
| A3+ 25 sheets | £25.99 | A3 75 sheets | £22.99 |
| Panoramic 25 sheets | £26.99 | 17" Roll 30 metres | £26.99 |
| 17" Roll 30 metres | £68.99 | 24" Roll 30 metres | £36.99 |
| 24" Roll 30 metres | £85.99 | Double Sided Matt 250 | gsm: |
| PF Lustre 275gsm: | | A4 100 sheets | £24.99 |
| 6x4 100 sheets | £12.99 | A3 50 sheets | £27.99 |
| 7x5 100 sheets | £16.99 | Fine Art / Fibre Base Page | apers: |
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| Panoramic 25 sheets | £26.99 | FB Distinction A3 25 sh | £48.99 |
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| A3+ 50 sheets | £47.99 | FB Matt A3 25 sheets | £38.99 |
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| 6x4 50 sheets | £8.99 |
| A4 20 sheets | £14.99 |
| A3 20 sheets | £29.99 |
| A3+ 20 sheets OFFER | £24.99 |
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One of the largest ranges of screw-in threaded One or the talget ranges of seek in treaded filters in the UK, from Hoya, Kood and Marumi. We carry sizes from 24mm, up to 105mm, and offer Clear Protectors, UVs, Skylights, Circular Polarisers, ND4s, ND8s, ND16s, ND32s, ND64s, ND500s, ND1000s, Variable NDs, Starbursts, Close Up Sets and more! Below are just a few examples...

| | KOOD Slim | Frame | Marumi DHG Frame Multi- | | Hoya HMC Slim Frame | |
|--------------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------------------|------------|------------------------|----------|
| UV Filters 37mm £4.99 | | Clear Protectors | | UV Filters | | |
| | 37mm 40.5mm | £4.99 | 37mm | £10.99 | 37mm | £12.99 |
| | 46mm | £4.99 | | £10.99 | | £12.99 |
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| | 52mm | £4.99 | 49mm | £10.99 | | £11.99 |
| | 52mm | £5.99 | 52mm | £10.99 | | £11.99 |
| | 58mm | £6.99 | 55mm | £11.99 | 58mm | £14.99 |
| | 62mm | £7.99 | 58mm | £12.99 | | £16.99 |
| | 67mm | £8.99 | 62mm | £14.99 | | £18.99 |
| | 72mm | £9.99 | 67mm | £15.99 | 72mm | £21.99 |
| | 77mm | £11.99 | 72mm | £17.99 | 77mm | £25.99 |
| | 82mm | £14.99 | 77mm | £19.99 | 82mm | £29.99 |
| | 86mm | £19.99 | 82mm | £22.99 | | |
| | | | | | HOYA Pro-1D | |
| | KOOD Slim | | Marumi DHG | | Frame Multi- | |
| | Circular Po | | Frame Multi- | -coated | Clear Protect | |
| | 37mm | £12.99 | UV Filters | | 52mm SPECIAL | |
| | 40.5mm | £12.99 | | £13.99 | 58mm | £28.99 |
| | 46mm | £12.99 | 58mm | £15.99 | | £31.99 |
| | 49mm | £12.99 | | £17.99 | | £35.99 |
| | 52mm | £14.99 | 67mm | £19.99 | 72mm | £39.99 |
| | 55mm | £15.99 | 72mm | £21.99 | 77mm SPECIAL | |
| | 58mm | £17.99 | 77mm | £24.99 | 82mm | £49.99 |
| | 62mm | £19.99 | Marumi DHG | Slim | HOYA Pro-1D | Slim |
| | 67mm | £22.99 | Frame Multi- | | Frame Multi- | |
| | 72mm | £26.99 | Circular Pola | | Circular Pola | |
| | 77mm | £29.99 | 52mm | £31.99 | 52mm | £52.99 |
| | 82mm | £34.99 | 58mm | £35.99 | 58mm | £60.99 |
| | 86mm | £39.99 | 62mm | £39.99 | 62mm | £67.99 |
| | KOOD | | 67mm | £44.99 | 67mm | £75.99 |
| | ND4 & ND8 | Filters | 72mm | £49.99 | 72mm | £90.99 |
| | 52mm | £26.99 | 77mm | £54.99 | 77mm SPECIAL | |
| | 58mm | £34.99 | 82mm | £69.99 | | £120.99 |
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Square Filters

We stock three widths of square filters: We stock time widths of square fitters.

A-type (67mm wide), P-Type (84mm wide) and Z-Type (100mm wide). Made in the UK, Kood square filters are optically flat, with excellent colour density, neutrality and stability. They received a maximum 5 star rating from Digital Camera Magazine.

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| Wide Angle Holder | £6.99 | Adapter Rings 52-95mm | £8.99 |
| Filter Wallet for 8 filters | £9.99 | ND2 Solid | £16.99 |
| Adapter Rings 49-82mm | £4.99 | ND2 Soft Graduated | £17.99 |
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| ND2 Solid | £12.99 | ND4 Solid | £16.99 |
| ND2 Soft Graduated | £13.99 | ND4 Soft Graduated | £17.99 |
| ND2 Hard Graduated | £13.99 | ND4 Hard Graduated | £17.99 |
| ND4 Solid | £12.99 | ND8 Solid | £18.99 |
| ND4 Soft Graduated | £13.99 | ND8 Soft Graduated | £19.99 |
| ND4 Hard Graduated | £13.99 | ND8 Hard Graduated | £19.99 |
| ND8 Solid | £14.99 | Light Blue Graduated | £17.99 |
| ND8 Soft Graduated | £15.99 | Dark Blue Graduated | £17.99 |
| ND8 Hard Graduated | £15.99 | Light Tobacco Graduated | |
| Light Blue Graduated | £12.99 | Dark Tobacco Graduated | |
| Dark Blue Graduated | £12.99 | Light Sunset Graduated | £18.99 |
| Light Tobacco Graduated | | Dark Sunset Graduated | £18.99 |
| Dark Tobacco Graduated | | A-Type: 67mm wide filt | ers |
| Light Sunset Graduated | | Standard Holder | £4.99 |
| Dark Sunset Graduated | | Adapter Rings 37-62mm | £8.99 |
| Starbursts x4, x6, x8 | £17.99 | ND2 Solid | £10.99 |
| Red/Green/Yellow each | | ND2 Graduated | £11.99 |
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| Soft Grad, ND4, ND4 Soft Gra | | ND4 Graduated | £11.99 |
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| HB-45 Nikon 18-55 VR £7.99 Stepping Rings 25mm to 105mm 160 different sizes £4.99-5.99 Reversing Rings 52mm to 77mm Canon, Nikon, Sony, Olympus and Pentax £9.99-19.99 Coupling Rings 49mm-77mm £9.99-£11.99 | 62mm Shaped Petal Hood 67mm Rubber Hood 67mm Shaped Petal Hood 72mm Rubber Hood 72mm Shaped Petal Hood 77mm Shaped Petal Hood 77mm Shaped Petal Hood Lens Caps Lens Caps Centre-Pinch Body & Rear Lens Caps | £7.99 £4.99 £7.99 £5.99 £9.99 £9.99 £9.99 |

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| HASSELBLAD XPAN USED | 120 645V back |
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| 90 F4 M£249 Centre filter 49mm£149 | 127 F3.5 KL 180 F4.5 C |
| HASSELBLAD 645 USED | 250 F4.5 KL M bo |
| H2 + prism + mag | Ext tube 2 |
| + 80 F2.8£1799 | MAMIYA RZ 6x7 |
| HM 16/32 back£199 | RZ Pro body |

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| WLF chrome£99 | No 2 ext tube | | |
| WLF early£49 Chimney£89 | Pro shade MINOLTA/SONY DIGITAL | | |
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| A12 latest chr/blk£249 | Sony A850 body | | |
| A12 latest chr£179 A12 late blk/chr£129 | Sony A700 body box Sony A200 body | | |
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MAMIYA RZ 6x7 USED

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Our Photoshop doc pulls out extra dynamic range in a summer shot

ARY KING'S COUNTRY HOUSE image was shot indoors on a sunny summer's day – a scenario that often results in challenging lighting conditions. "I didn't have a reflector or flash, so I had to rely on natural light only. It was a beautiful day outside, so I wanted to capture both the blue sky through the window as well as the jug and paintings inside. I let my camera meter the shot, and it did a good job of not blowing out the highlights on the right side of the jug. However, I'd like to be able to see the details inside the room as well as outside– is that possible?"

Digital Doctor says: Mary's shot has lots going on both inside and out. The detail and texture in each area of the picture give the eye plenty to explore, and the warm colours inside the room also contrast well with the greens and blues outside. Overall, it's clear that Mary had the right ideas in mind when she took the shot – all that's needed is the right processing of the RAW file to draw out the detail in the exposure.

My first task was to lift the shadows and pull back the highlights. However, as I knew the edit was going to be quite an extreme one I didn't want to make global adjustments. Making extreme shadows and highlights adjustments can leave your image looking over-processed and lacking in contrast. Instead, I decided to use Lightroom to make localised adjustments using the **Graduated Filter** tool. I decreased the exposure and pulled down the highlights on the right side of the shot using the **Highlights** slider. The sky was starting to become visible, but the original shot was overexposed in this area, so I had to increase the **Contrast** and **Vibrance** to bring out the colours in the sky and clouds.

I used another **Graduated Filter** to increase the **Exposure** and lift the **Shadows** on the left side of the image. The details of the jug, table and paintings started to become visible. The original shot was underexposed on the left, so even after increasing the exposure, the saturation and contrast were still lacking. Increasing the **Contrast, Vibrance** and **Clarity** helped make things look crisper, but now the hues were starting to look a little off.

There was a yellowish tint to the wooden objects and they looked a little artificial. To fix that, I opened the converted RAW file in Photoshop and used both a **Hue/Saturation** Adjustment Layer and a **Color Balance** Adjustment Layer add some red into the wood and cyan into the sky. This made the colours look much more natural.





I wanted to brighten specific groups of colours, so I created a duplicate of the image on a new Layer. I changed the Blending Mode to Luminosity and converted the Layer to mono using Image Adjustments Black & White.

I pulled down the Blues and Cyans sliders to further deepen the sky colour. I also increased the Yellows to brighten the grass and make the gold areas in the room more prominent. With that done, I cropped out the partial candelabra on the left. The final touch was to maximise the opulence of the details in the room with a little sharpening.

So ultimately I've pulled back the highlights, lifted the shadows and fixed the colours, which has the effect of expanding the dynamic range and creating a balanced exposure that's akin to what Mary saw when she took the shot.

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